

*Moses said to Yahweh, "Behold, you tell me, 'Bring up this people:' and you haven't let me know whom you will send with me. Yet **you have said, 'I know you by name,** and you have also **found favor in my sight.**' Now therefore, **if I have found favor in your sight, please show me now your ways, that I may know you, so that I may find favor in your sight: and consider that this nation is your people.**"*

*He said, "**My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.**"*

*He said to him, "**If your presence doesn't go with me, don't carry us up from here. For how would people know that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Isn't it in that you go with us, so that we are separated, I and your people, from all the people who are on the surface of the earth?**"*
(Exodus 33:12-16)

If your presence doesn't go with us, we are not going forward without you.

The **still small voice is the Holy Spirit channeling the presence** of the Godhead into and through us.

*He said, **I have been very jealous for Yahweh, the God of Armies; for the children of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and slain your prophets with the sword: and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.***

*He said, **Go forth, and stand on the mountain before Yahweh. Behold, Yahweh passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before Yahweh; but Yahweh was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but Yahweh was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but Yahweh was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.***

*It was so, **when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entrance of the cave. Behold, there came a voice to him, and said, What are you doing here, Elijah?***

*He said, **I have been very jealous for Yahweh, the God of Armies; for the children of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and slain your prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.*** (1 Kings 19:10-14)

Moses became very **zealous for his concept of God** too. While Moses was **growing in grace** to **increasingly reflect** God's disposition, there were times when he took offense and misrepresented God.

*It happened, as soon as he came near to the camp, that **he saw the calf and the dancing: and Moses' anger grew hot, and he threw the tablets out of his hands, and broke them beneath the mountain. He took the calf which they had made, and burnt it with fire, ground it to powder, and scattered it on the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it.*** (Exodus 32:19-20)

*then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, "Whoever is on Yahweh's side, come to me!" All the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him. **He said to them, "Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel, 'Every man put his sword on his thigh, and go back and forth from gate to gate throughout the camp, and every man kill his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.'**"*
(Exodus 32:26-27)

How often God's leaders **resort to invoking His name** to carry out their own **impulsive solutions** to a God-sized problem. The tragic part is that it is **God's reputation** and glory that **gets distorted**.

*and Elijah said to them, **Take the prophets of Baal; don't let one of them escape. They took them; and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and killed them there.*** (1 Kings 18:40)

*Moses returned to Yahweh, and said, "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made themselves gods of gold. Yet **now, if you will, forgive their sin--and if not, please blot me out of your book which you have written.**"*

*Yahweh said to Moses, "**Whoever has sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. Now go, lead the people to the place of which I have spoken to you. Behold, my angel shall go before you. Nevertheless in the day when I punish, I will punish them for their sin.**" (Exodus 32:31-34)*

*Yahweh spoke to Moses, "**Depart, go up from here, you and the people that you have brought up out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your seed.'**" (Exodus 33:1)*

Notice the pattern here. The **people reference Moses** as the one **who brought them up** out of Egypt and who **apparently had abandoned them**. Then **God informs Moses** of what they were doing with their invented god calf, and identifies Moses in **the same way**.

*Yahweh spoke to Moses, "Go, get down; for **your people, who you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves!**" (Exodus 32:7)*

What is it **we can learn** from both of these stories involving **Elijah and Moses**? Its **not that we focus on their mistakes to feel aloof**, or even **despairing** because we find ourselves doing something similar. Rather the reasons these stories are provided is so that we may **be encouraged** as we observe **how God worked with people** throughout history as they struggled through dark, fear-based beliefs about living according to God's ways in covenant relation with Him.

With both of these men, **God demonstrated** how **people with dark views of God** are gently led more and more **into greater light** of truth about God's heart of compassion and patience. Often God allows us to **act out our dark mistaken notions** of what needs to happen to correct faults in order that we may come to realize that **our ways fall far short** of fixing the problems that sin causes in our lives. God allows us to attempt to lead others the way we imagine He is doing, only to discover that **pride and fear distorts our perceptions** and **we are as much a part of the problem** as those we are asked to lead. What people need **more than good leaders** is to come to **know God directly themselves**.

As we respond to the leading of God in our own lives and become aware that **long-held opinions** and beliefs about God are **inadequate** to address crisis, we realize that what we **need more** than anything are **fresh revelations of God's heart** beyond anything we have known previously. What we need is to pay more **attention to that quiet inner voice** of the Spirit who is ever prompting us but **often goes unnoticed**. This in turn causes us to **go back to our Source** and cry out for help, for **greater wisdom, humility, awareness and perspective** so that we may rely **more on God's techniques and disposition** rather than leaning on our own understanding and habits of thinking.

What followed is one of the **strangest arguments in history** as Moses insists that God repent.

*"Now therefore **leave me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them, and that I may consume them; and I will make of you a great nation.**" Moses begged Yahweh his God, and said, "**Yahweh, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, that you have brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?**" (Exodus 32:10-11)*

***Yahweh repented of the evil which he said he would do to his people.** (Exodus 32:14)*

What happens next is just as bizarre. The **very thing Moses rebuked God for** he turns around and **does himself**. This is how God often works to correct us, but reflecting back to us our own faults in order that we may come to realize our great need of acquiring a much more complete concept of the God who created us and wants us to experience and interactive dynamic fellowship with Him.

*It happened, as soon as he came near to the camp, that he saw the calf and the dancing: and **Moses' anger grew hot**, and he threw the tablets out of his hands, and broke them beneath the mountain. He took the calf which they had made, and burnt it with fire, ground it to powder, and scattered it on the water; and made the children of Israel drink of it.*

*Moses said to Aaron, "**What did these people do to you**, that you have brought a great sin on them?"*

*Aaron said, "**Don't let the anger of my lord grow hot**. You know **the people**, that **they are set on evil**. For they said to me, 'Make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we don't know what has become of him.'*

*I said to them, 'Whoever has any gold, let them take it off:' so they gave it to me; and **I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf.**" (Exodus 32:19-24)*

What did Moses need most? God was allowing all these things to bring Moses to the **realization** that **God's ways** must be **far different** than **how we attempt to resolve** the problem of sin in society.

Moses was **growing in awareness** of both God's amazing **grace and kindness** as well as in awareness of **how messed up everyone is** from the effects of sin and selfishness in the heart.

As is often the case, **human leaders**, even devout, sincere, honest-hearted leaders, are **many times only one or two steps ahead** in maturity and knowing God than those **looking to them for guidance**.

*He said, "Please **show me your glory**." He said, "I will make **all my goodness** pass before you, and will **proclaim the name of Yahweh** before you. I will be **gracious** to whom I will be gracious, and will show **mercy** on whom I will show mercy." (Exodus 33:18-19)*

*Therefore **Yahweh will wait, that he may be gracious to you**; and therefore **he will be exalted**, that he may **have mercy on you**, for Yahweh is a **God of justice**. **Blessed** are all **those who wait for him**.*

*For the people will dwell in Zion at Jerusalem. You will weep no more. **He will surely be gracious to you** at the voice of your cry. **When he hears you, he will answer you**. Though the Lord may give you the **bread of adversity** and the **water of affliction**, yet **your teachers won't be hidden anymore**, but your eyes will **see your teachers**; and when you turn to the right hand, and when you turn to the left, **your ears will hear a voice behind you**, saying, "This is the way. Walk in it." (Isaiah 30:18-21)*

Moses entered a greater level of maturity when he **acknowledged his inability to handle the future** without God's continual presence to guide and protect and empower them. Without God's presence, **apart from connection** through the **still small voice**, the **future is impossible to navigate**.

Elijah was normally guided and empowered by that Voice until his **indulgence in poking fun** at his **enemies** publicly eroded his humility and **obscured the quiet internal voice** of warning. After the spectacular display of **shock and awe overwhelmed** the people's **reluctance** and **apparently reversed**

their apostasy, his flush **emotions of victory aroused pride** and self-dependence causing him to brush aside the promptings of the Spirit. He chose rather to give preference to tradition and popular expectations of conquerors, and the **spirit of offense led him into violence in the name of God**, not unlike Moses. This breach of the protective presence quickly weakened the divine shield of protection allowing the **spirit of fear access to seize control of his will**. This culminated in his uncharacteristic **fleeing in terror** for nearly a month and a half.

The **point of departure** that led to this breach in the wall of divine protection, was **favoring offense** in his spirit **rather than choosing godly grief**. The result was the **violent assault** on his enemies **instead of praying for them and forgiving** as Jesus taught and demonstrated.

What is an **important takeaway** from all of these stories? It may be learning the difference between **grieving like God** does or acting from a **spirit of offense** as the world expects.

*He said to them, "Most certainly I tell you, there are some standing here who will in no way taste death until they see the **Kingdom of God come with power**." After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John, and brought them up onto a high mountain privately by themselves, and **he was changed into another form** in front of them. His clothing became glistening, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them. **Elijah and Moses appeared** to them, and they were talking with Jesus. (Mark 9:1-4)*

What was the factor that **all three** of these men **had in common**?

Each one of them had experienced going **40 days without eating or drinking**.

Each one of them had been **confronted with the temptation** of fear, pride and defensiveness.

Only one of them had responded with an **accurate reflection of God's disposition** in the showdown.

*God, having **in the past** spoken to the fathers **through the prophets** at many times and in various ways, has at the end of these days **spoken to us by his Son**, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds. **His Son is the radiance of his glory, the very image of his substance**, and upholding all things by the word of his power.... (Hebrews 1:1-3)*

Throughout His life on earth **Jesus consistently displayed the spirit of grieving** where **others would take offense**. Jesus **never reacted defensively** but always treated even His worst enemies with humility, compassion and graciousness.

Elijah allowed **fear to overwhelm his faith** because he **chose to indulge in violence** – the same spirit **Jesus rebuked** when it surfaced in His disciples.

Moses' anger burned hot when he saw his people betraying the God who had just worked the most spectacular miracles in history to rescue them from slavery. This despite the fact he had **just rebuked God** for the same thing. But then he **ordered the slaughter** of thousands of them in response.

*So, then, my beloved brothers, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger; for **the anger of man doesn't produce the righteousness of God**. Therefore, putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, **receive with humility the implanted word**, which is able to save your souls. (James 1:19-21)*