

RETOURNER À L'AUTEL

Falling, being lifted, seizing

Twelve situations the programme does not plan for.

retour-a-lautel.pages.dev/animateur

« Un seul autel. Beaucoup de chemins pour y revenir. »

Falling, being lifted, seizing

Twelve situations the programme does not plan for.

Elijah called down fire from heaven. **The next day, he sat down under a broom tree and asked to die** (1 Kings 19:4). It is the same man, one chapter apart. He had not believed wrongly, he had not failed at anything: **he was at the end**. And God did not lecture him. He made him sleep, he made him eat, and he gave him someone.

Rebuilding an altar protects you from nothing. The man you are walking with will fall: weeks when nothing moves, weeks when he doubts, weeks when he wants to give it all up, and the day he falls back after having decided. **And you will fall too:** the evenings when you cannot take any more, when you wonder by what right you teach what you live badly, when you believe you are the last one standing. **Elijah believed he was the last one. He was wrong: there were seven thousand.**

Then there is the opposite. **Moments when something suddenly opens:** he wants to give his heart, he finally dares to say that he doubts, he raises the objection he has been holding for three months. These are not problems. **They are the only things that matter, and one clumsy sentence closes them again.**

Hence the three words. **Falling**, because it does not only happen to you. **Being lifted**, in the passive, because Elijah did not pull himself together on his own: he was fed, he was made to sleep, he was given a man. **And seizing**, because what opens does not stay open for long.

Twelve situations. In all twelve, the same act: you put down the outline, and you look at the person. The programme will wait. He will not.

He is stuck

Week after week, nothing moves. He comes, he listens, he leaves. No question, no challenge kept, no feedback.

Do not speed him up. A man who still comes has not given up: he is measuring whether you will grow tired of him. **Many have already been dropped once.**

Do three things, in this order. **Bring him back to Study 1**, whatever week it is: the rule of return exists precisely for him. **Ask him what is happening at home**, not where he is in the programme. And **tell him he has the right to have nothing to say**: "nothing this week" is a complete answer.

What you do not do: speed things up, add content, change method, or find him another facilitator. **Stagnation is almost never a problem of material.**

He doubts

Not about his salvation, that is another case. **He doubts God.** He wonders whether any of this is true.

Doubt is not the opposite of faith. The opposite of faith is indifference. A man who doubts is still talking to you.

The father of the possessed boy says: *"I believe; help my unbelief!"* (Mark 9:24). **Jesus does not ask him to choose between the two.** He heals the child.

And with Thomas, Jesus **gives the proof he demands** (John 20:27). He does not shame him, he does not lecture him: he holds out his hands to him.

So: **listen to the question all the way through**, without answering while he is speaking. **Say what you do not know**. Then open the text with him, without concluding in his place. And if it takes another week, take it.

He wants to stop

He tells you, or he stops coming.

Jesus holds no one back. When the crowd leaves, he turns to the twelve: *"Do you want to go away as well?"* (John 6:67). **He does not guilt-trip, he does not negotiate, he does not run after them.** He asks the question and he waits.

Do the same. **Let him go without condemnation, and leave the door wide open.** Tell him, in plain words, that the door will not close and that you will be there if he comes back. Then be quiet.

What you never do: shame him, remind him of what he owes you, tell him what he is missing out on, or send someone else to convince him. **A man dragged back by force never comes back freely.**

He falls back

He had decided, he had prayed, and he fell back. He is ashamed, and often he disappears before you even find out.

Jesus had foreseen Peter's fall, and he had already foreseen his return: *"I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers"* (Luke 22:32). **When, not if.**

And by the lake, Jesus makes no reproach. He builds a fire, he prepares food, and he asks the same question three times, which is not "why did you do that" but **"do you love me"** (John 21:9-17).

So: **do not ask for an explanation.** Do not run an investigation. **Bring him back to Study 1**, the same one as the first time, and let him come back without paying.

Relapse is not the end of the road. It is the road. A man who falls back and comes back is stronger than a man who has never fallen.

You are exhausted

Elijah has just called down fire from heaven. In the next chapter, he sits down under a broom tree and asks to die (1 Kings 19:4). This is not a weak man. It is the same man, one day later.

Look at what God does, and above all at what he does not do. He reproaches him for nothing. He does not remind him of Carmel. He does not ask him to pull himself together.

He makes him sleep. He makes him eat. He makes him sleep again. He makes him eat again (1 Kings 19:5-7). *"The journey is too great for you."*

Two meals and two naps before a single word. That is God saying it, not me.

So: sleep, eat, and **make no decision this week**. If you have to suspend a session, suspend it. A cancelled session breaks no one. **A facilitator who collapses does.**

You think you have no right to be doing this

"Who am I to walk alongside someone. I do not live up to what I am teaching him."

That is true. And it is not an obstacle, it is the condition.

The stone of the altar must not be cut: *"if you wield your tool on it you profane it"* (Exodus 20:25). **You are no more cut than the man you are walking with.** You both go into the wall rough.

And Elijah, to whom God answers, **does not receive a theology lesson: he receives someone.** God gives him Elisha (1 Kings 19:16). He does not replace him, he does not correct him. **He gives him a man.**

So: **do not resign. Take someone with you.**

You are alone

Elijah says it twice, and he says it with force: *"I, even I only, am left"* (1 Kings 19:10 and 19:14).

It was false. God answers him: *"Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal"* (1 Kings 19:18).

He was not alone. He did not know it. And no one had told him.

This is the most common loneliness among facilitators: **he walks alongside people, and no one walks alongside him.** He carries heavy things, he has the right to tell them to no one, and he ends up believing he is the last one.

So: **find your partner.** Not a superior, not an evaluator: someone you can say "this week, I can't do it" to. **If you have no one, that is the first thing to sort out, before the next session.**

You want to stop

Elijah asked to die. **God did not dismiss him, and he did not scold him.**

Two things must be distinguished, and never confused.

You want to stop facilitating. Then stop. **It is neither a fault nor a desertion.** Entrust the people to someone, tell them yourself that you are stopping, and leave cleanly. A man who stops in time will be able to start again. A man who holds on until he breaks will not. **The fire was never yours.**

Or else you no longer want to live. That is not the same thing, and **no biblical text is the answer.** Do not stay alone with that and do not write it in a notebook: **talk to someone today**, a doctor, someone close to you, a helpline. Tell your partner, your pastor, your family. **Elijah was not left alone. Neither must you be.**

RIGOR • The text does not say that Elijah was depressed, and we make no diagnosis. It says that he was exhausted, that he wanted to die, and that **God fed him, made him sleep, listened to him and gave him someone.** Do not go further than the text, and never replace care with a verse.

He says: "I want to give my heart to Jesus"

He prays, not you. If you pray in his place, or if you make him repeat a formula, **you are the one with the relationship, not him.** He will have attended his own conversion.

Three footholds, then you keep quiet. Let him tell God who he is, without fixing anything up. Let him say that it is Him he wants. Let him ask for his Spirit for today. **Then silence.** Do not comment on what has just happened.

No paperwork the first week. And **the declaration of loyalty before any baptism:** he must know which Church he is entering.

Full document: [procedure-du-oui.md](#) . Nine sections, including the three questions to ask before any procedure: is he a minor, is he safe at home, is he lucid and free.

He doubts his salvation

Do not reassure him right away. Ask him: *"What stops you from believing that 1 John 5:13 is speaking to you?"*

Then go back over the **7 steps of assurance of salvation, one to one, never in a plenary.** They are in Study 1.

The rhythm is always the same: **READ** a verse, **ASK** a question. You do not preach. You get him reading, and you get him talking.

Why it is a gift: a man who tells you he doubts his salvation has just trusted you. **Most keep quiet and leave.**

He objects, he argues, he tests you

Never bluff. *"I don't know, I'll look into it, I'll get back to you."* Nothing discredits you faster than an invented answer.

Do not answer questions he is not asking. Most of the damage in evangelism comes from people answering objections **that no one has raised.**

And if it turns into a debate, stop and come back to the person. You do not win a heart by a debate.

What you bring out: the 5 objections from the STEPS sheet for the topic. The answer and the verse, already written, in French, for your island. **Do not redo that work: it is done.**

He is in danger, or he is fighting an addiction

NEVER send someone back to reconcile with an abuser. If there has been violence or coercive control, the first step is not reconciliation, **it is protection.** Forgiveness can happen at a distance, without seeing the person again, and without their knowing it.

Promise no immediate deliverance. *"Come to Jesus and your addiction will disappear"* is a lie that kills: **at the first relapse, he will conclude that God has rejected him,** and he will not come back.

No public appeal. No raised hands, no public confession. **Shame closes again what grace has just opened.**

Do not set faith against help. An addiction often requires, **in addition** to prayer, real support, sometimes medical.
Refer him on. Do not improvise.