

Thank you for your interest in the “*Folks Like Us*” Bible studies by Fran Sciacca. Whether you’re using them for your own spiritual growth and journey, or as a resource for your small group, Sunday school, or homeschool program, you’ll soon discover why these studies originally sold over 600,000 copies in their print editions. The recent decision by the publisher to discontinue print editions and to return the publishing rights back to Fran has given him the freedom to make the nearly 70 individual character studies available to you...at no cost.

Before you make copies and use the studies...

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- **[DONATIONS]** – Although there is no charge for the studies, feel free to make a non-deductible donation to help offset the annual cost of web-hosting, etc. at: [paypal.me/handssofthur](https://www.paypal.me/handssofthur)
- **[QUESTIONS/COMMENTS]** – Email them to: information@fransciacca.com

Other great resources on fransciacca.com

Now that you’ve begun to explore the Bible study resources developed by Fran Sciacca, you will almost certainly benefit from the other things that he has made available:

- **“*The Road to Shalom*” podcast** – thought-provoking and thoroughly biblical, Fran explores what the Bible calls “shalom,”—the way things are *supposed* to be in God’s Kingdom, why they’re not, and how to restore them. All three seasons are available on the website.
- ***Biblical literacy courses*** – Three, 13-week Bible courses covering the entire Bible. Includes individual course books, audio, and optional animated slide supplements. Course books and animated slide supplements may be purchased on the web store.
- **“*What’s Wrong With the World?*”** – A 14-part video series exploring the questions, “*What is the gospel, and does it really matter?*” and “*What is a disciple, and what does one look like?*” Each episode includes a small group handout as well as supplemental leader’s notes. You may take the series for a “test drive” and purchase the series.
- **“*Knot or Noose? - Recovering the Mystery of Marriage*”** – A 9-part video series for singles, engaged, or married couples exploring marriage from a radical perspective. Instead of trying to figure out how to get God into marriage, this series will guide you into how to place marriage into the center of the larger redemptive plan of God. This conference has been presented live throughout the U.S. in a multitude of different settings. Each episode includes everything needed for a small group. You may take the series for a “test drive” and order the series.



FOLKS Like Us

ELIJAH

“Back-slidden or burned out?”

Timeless truths from our ancient past,
for a journey with God in the modern era.

Fran Sciacca

“Folks Like Us” — an introduction

Over the years I’ve written and published a number of Bible studies that collectively have sold well over a half-million copies. They were forged, most of them, in the furnaces of pain, doubt, and loneliness. Maybe that’s why they were well-used, they touched people where they hurt most.

Recently, my publisher decided that they no longer wanted to handle the books that contained these 60 or so individual studies. So, I’ve decided to make them available to any who might benefit from them. At no cost.

I have always believed that because God thought it best to become human in the Incarnation, that perhaps “incarnational truth” was His preferred method of revealing Himself and His purposes to us. I suppose that’s where the basic genre of these studies originated. I wanted to provide believers with Bible studies rooted in our ancestral past. The lives of men and women, who it turns out, are “folks just like us” in so many ways.

So, please take your time and work slowly through as many of these studies as you care to do... there’s a lot of them! And may God use the combination of the struggles and insights of your *ancient* brothers and sisters, combined with those of mine, your modern brother, to help you in your spiritual journey. That is the goal of this project.

Warmly in The Lamb,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fran Sciacca". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fran Sciacca
Birmingham, AL

ELIJAH

“Back-slidden or burned out?”

A **BIDING PRINCIPLE** – Often what we consider a hopeless emotional or spiritual battle is actually due to our own neglect of basic physical needs, such as proper rest, food, and exercise.

“Fatigue makes cowards of us all.” — Vince Lombardi

Elijah was a ninth century B.C. prophet who shined for God in one of the darkest chapters of Israel's history. His name means "my God is Jehovah," and his life bore out the reality of that name in his arduous pace of ministry. But perhaps Elijah lost track of his basic needs as he spent so much of his time and energy traveling back and forth in his home territory of Gilead, a mountainous region on the eastern shore of the Jordan. Turns out, he isn't a likely candidate for the poster-child of self care.

KEY SCRIPTURE: 1 Kings 17:1 - 19:21

STUDY QUESTIONS...

1. What can we learn about the spiritual condition of the northern kingdom of Israel during the early years of Elijah's ministry? (1 Kings 16:29-33)
2. What miraculous things did Elijah witness from the hand of God in the first three and a half years his ministry? (1 Kings 17:1-24)
3. Read and try to inject yourself into the following passages. Then describe the physical *and* emotional effects you think these various situations likely had on Elijah.
 - the spiritual “contest” at Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 18:16-40)
 - his hike to the *top* of Mt. Carmel (18:42)
 - the sixteen-mile run to Jezreel (18:45-46)
 - The ninety-mile trek from Jezreel to Beersheba (19:1-3)
 - the twenty-mile walk from Beersheba to the wilderness of Judah (19:4)

SCRIPTURE MEMORY (optional)

- Fatigue - Psalm 127:1-2
- Isolation - Proverbs 18:1

OPTIONAL

1. Do you have sufficient time of quiet and tranquility in your daily schedule to hear the "still small voice" of God, if he were to speak? How about taking a half a day this month to spend being "quiet with God." Bring a notebook and Bible, and go to a friend's house, a park, or some other quiet place where you can be alone. Spend the time reading, walking, relaxing, and praying. (If you are a parent of young children, perhaps your spouse could watch them for you.)
2. In 1 Peter 5:8, Peter likens Satan to a lion. A veritable hunting machine. One effective hunting tactic of the lion is to separate its prey from the rest of the group. Once alone, the hunted is soon to be the next meal for the hunter. This is also a fruitful tactic for Satan with us. He urges us to pull away from people, and then uses mental isolation to delude us into thinking that we are unique in our particular struggle or sin. When we are alone, our isolated *assumptions* begin to seem like absolute truth. Elijah's inner life was one of a recluse. He came to believe that what he thought about himself was true. That he was the only believer left. But the truth was, there were over seven thousand faithful children of God in Israel!

How about you? Are you allowing yourself to be isolated by the Enemy? Do you have at least one friend (other than your spouse) to share with? To keep your thinking true? If not, make this a matter of immediate prayer and action. *(If you're doing this study in a group, consider pairing up with another person.)*