

LIFE OF ELIJAH DISCUSSION GUIDE #1

1 Kings 17:1-24

Overview

Read the following overview:

Elijah appears out of nowhere in the story in 1 Kings. He's an unknown from Tishbe, an obscure village, and yet he tells King Ahab there will be no rain for three years except by his word. Where does Elijah get this confidence? From a private life "before the Lord" (17:1).

God then sends Elijah to hide, first at the brook Cherith, then with a poor widow in Zarephath. And in both places, Elijah has nothing, but is sustained by the Lord — being fed by ravens at Cherith and then by a widow whose jar of flour and jug of oil never runs out. But then tragedy hits as the widow's son dies. And instead of hiding his grief or anger, Elijah brings these emotions to God and pleads for the boy's life, and God restores the boy's life. This section ends with the widow telling Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth" (17:24).

Our introduction to Elijah is a great example of personal dependence upon God. Elijah doesn't earn his standing before God through strength or performance, nor does he speak to the king or raise the widow's son in his strength or performance — he relies on God. Through our introduction to Elijah, this passage reveals that while we are often tempted to build our confidence and security on what we can see, prove, or control, a hidden life of trust in God is where ultimate power and stability are found.

Scripture

Read 1 Kings 17:1-24 aloud together.

After reading, discuss: What stands out to you from this passage?

After discussing your initial observations, use the following questions to reflect on how this passage of Scripture applies to your everyday life.

Reflect Together

1. In this passage, Elijah relied on God for strength and provision. Where does your confidence (or lack of confidence) come from? What are you most tempted to trust in instead of God?

2. Elijah's public boldness came from time spent standing "before the Lord" in secret. What does your "secret" life with God look like? In other words, how are you spending time alone with God? How is God strengthening you through your time with him?
3. When tragedy struck, Elijah didn't carry his grief alone. He brought it directly to God. What difficult areas of life have you been carrying alone? What would it look like to allow others to come alongside you?
4. *Christ Connection:* Read Luke 4:24-26. In this passage, Jesus laments the lack of honor he is shown and connects his situation to Elijah and the widow from Zarephath. Jesus, the Son of God, lived a relatively hidden life. He gave up the respect he deserved because he loves you and he wanted to save you from sin and death. How does this encourage you when you feel overlooked or like your life doesn't matter much?
5. Question for everyone: in what areas of your life is God inviting you into a season of hidden, quiet faithfulness?

Practice for the Week Ahead

Read the following practice for the week ahead:

One of the hallmarks of Elijah's life is that he cultivated a hidden life with God that empowered his public life before others. Throughout our Life of Elijah series, what would it look like for you to seek the Lord in quiet, hidden places like Elijah?

Use this first week to make a plan. Choose a time and place to set aside 20 minutes or more at least 5 days a week, just to be with God. Use that time to pray and to engage with his Word. For ideas on how to pray or engage with Scripture, check out our [Scripture and Prayer Guide](#).

End in Prayer

Invite one person or several people to close your time in prayer. Pray:

Thank God for his faithful provision, the kind Elijah received at the brook and in the widow's home, and for the truth that he sustains us even when we have nothing to fall back on.

Ask the Spirit to grow in each person a deeper confidence in God rather than in what we can see, prove, or control, and to give courage to bring our grief, fear, and honest questions to him instead of carrying them alone.

Note: On Discussion Guide weeks, you won't have time for everyone to share prayer requests. That's okay. Be sure to prioritize praying for specific needs on other weeks your group meets.