

LIFE OF ELIJAH DISCUSSION GUIDE #3

1 Kings 18:19-46

Overview

Read the following overview:

During the reign of Ahab, many Israelites worshipped Baal and Asherah, who were false gods of other nations, and some Israelites even became prophets of Baal or Asherah. When Elijah returns to Ahab to confront him, he asks for all of these “prophets” to be gathered together at Mount Carmel. Once they are gathered, Elijah speaks and says, “How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him” (v. 21).

Then, in order to prove who is truly God, Elijah challenges the prophets of Baal. The challenge he suggests is that each prepare a bull and wood for a burnt offering, but instead of lighting the wood, they are to pray to Baal and to God and ask them to light their offerings. The challenge is accepted, and all morning long the prophets of Baal call upon Baal to light the fire, but he does not. Then, Elijah called all the people to himself, prayed to God, and fire fell and consumed his offering. The writer says when the people saw it, “[T]hey fell on their faces and said, ‘The Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God’” (v. 39). And afterwards, the Lord sent rain once again.

Scripture

Read 1 Kings 18:19-46 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, God’s people are torn between following God and looking elsewhere for life. Where do you feel that tension in your own life? In what ways do you feel caught between longing for God but clinging to idols, wanting deep spiritual life but also wanting worldly things, desiring truth but believing lies?

2. Our world says that it's up to each of us to decide what is the best way to live. In what ways does that idea actually hold us back from experiencing real life? How is Elijah's example (and the Christian life) different?
3. Can you remember a specific season or event when God was faithful to you in the midst of drought, doubt, or an impossible situation? What did that season teach you about yourself and about God?
4. *Christ Connection:* Each of us is tempted to base our standing before God on our performance, whether we're standing firm or bowing to the idols of our culture. Read Romans 3:21-26. How does Jesus' sacrifice for us reshape that understanding? What is the one and only source of righteousness before God?
5. Question for everyone: Where in your life right now might God be inviting you to stop "limping between two different opinions" and instead live by faith in him? What would change if you choose God's way?

Practice for the Week Ahead

Read the following practice for the week ahead:

Throughout our Life of Elijah series, we're encouraging our church to seek the Lord in quiet, hidden places like Elijah.

This week, plan to set aside 20 minutes or more at least 5 days a week just to be with the Lord. As you pray and engage with Scripture, use part of that time to reflect on where you currently feel caught between faithfulness to God and clinging to idols. Confess those areas to God and ask him to help you choose faithfulness.

End in Prayer

Depending on time, you might have one person pray or several.

Pray:

Thank God for Jesus' sacrifice for you, and that because of Jesus you don't have to strive or perform your way to him.

Ask the Spirit to grow in each person a deeper trust and faithfulness in God, and a turning away from sin and worldly things.