

Small Group Discussion Guide — May 3, 2020

- Series: Character Studies
 - Sermon: Elijah's Detour
 - Scripture: 1 Kings 19: 1-19 (NLT)
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FOLLOW-UP FROM LAST WEEK:

Have you found lately that you have a tendency to want to be in control? Has that tendency changed for you over the course of this quarantine? In what way?

CONNECT:

1. Do you tend to get off the highway when your GPS shows traffic ahead, or do you stay on? Why?
2. Have you ever made a life-changing decision, then reconsidered and gone the other way? What happened to make you reconsider?

ENGAGE:

1. Read 1 Kings 19: 1-8.
 - What caused Elijah's fear? Where did his detour take him? What was his prayer?
 - What was God's response to Elijah's prayer of fear? What did God do first for Elijah? Second? How does this response reveal God's character?
 - What is the significance of Mt. Sinai? (See Exodus 3: 1-2.) *Note: Some translations call this place Mt. Horeb.*
2. Read 1 Kings 19: 9-19.
 - Based on Elijah's actions and response to God's question, what lies of the enemy was Elijah believing?
 - What is God's question to Elijah? Why does He phrase it in this way?
 - How does God's "gentle whisper" change Elijah's course? How is God's question an invitation?

APPLY:

1. When you look back at the path that led you to where you are in your life right now, do you see any times you may have been on a detour? What was that time like? Did you feel afraid? Lost? What were you basing your decisions on during that time? What got you back on a path toward life?
2. Have you ever heard or felt God asking you, "What are you doing here?" What was your answer? Did it feel like an invitation to you? If so, how?
3. God ultimately sends Elijah back from where he came with a new set of instructions. Describe a time God's presence has directed you back to where he wanted you to be.

PRAY:

Dear Heavenly Father, you approach us with gentleness, love, and care. You created us by breathing life into us. Help us to feel your life-giving breath, and follow you along the path you have for us. May your words cover our hearts and move us to the place where you are, to the place where you have good things planned for us. Shift our hearts to worship you alone. May our hearts reflect this desire to know you and walk with you more fully. In your name we pray, Amen.

GOING DEEPER

1. This quarantine has put us all in a very new set of circumstances. How do you feel your decision-making has changed during this time? Are you struggling to make big or small decisions? When you envision future months or years, do you see a clear path for yourself? Is there a particular decision you are wrestling with right now?
2. In a moment of doubt and weakness, Elijah says, "I have had enough, Lord." When Elijah got to Sinai, he went into a cave and isolated from his community during this time of fear. Can you relate to his retreat? What does "hiding in a cave" look like for you?
3. Find out the actual distance between Mount Carmel and Jezreel. Imagine Elijah running faster than a chariot for that distance, and how he might have felt God with him during that experience. Almost immediately afterward, he hears that Jezebel wants to have him killed and is detoured by fear. Consider a time in your life that you've gone from a time of bold faith to fear, when circumstances have changed. What insight does Elijah's story bring to your own story?
4. Read 2 Kings 1-2. What was God's ultimate plan for Elijah?

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

1 Kings 19:1-19

Matthew 17:3

OTHER REFERENCES:

The Surprising Power of Questions by Alison Wood Brooks and Leslie K. John, Harvard Business Review, May-June 2018 Issue

<https://hbr.org/2018/05/the-surprising-power-of-questions>