



ELIJAH

SESSION 3

- **Main Passage:** 1 Kings 19:1-8
 - **Purpose:** The God who we serve is our strength when we are courageous and our comfort when we are afraid.
 - **Session Snapshot:** After the major victory at Baal, we see Elijah flee from Jezebel. As we spend time in this passage, we have the opportunity to see God meet His prophet in the exact way He needs to be met. We hope to see God meet us with what we need rather than where we think we should be with what we think we should have.
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GETTING STARTED

Kick-off your time together with a quick connection time or reviewing what you did in the last session.

FIRST, remind your group that this is week 3 of their video series on Elijah and that it's part of a larger study looking at the real men of the Bible.

THEN, if you want to start with asking men for prayer requests, checking in on how their weeks have gone, or any other housekeeping tasks, do so.

FINALLY, if there are no questions or other input, transition into the *Digging In* section of your leader's guide.

DIGGING IN

Jump into the session by watching this week's video.

FIRST, play the video. You can access the video by logging into your Iron Hill Press account.

THEN, when the video is over, lead men in a short discussion based on what Rick covered. Feel free to come up with your own questions, but consider asking Elijah's similar to those below.

- **Compare and contrast what we see when Elijah faces off with the prophets at Baal from chapter 18 to his fear of Jezebel in this passage.**

- **What are some examples of times in your life when you wanted to run and hide because the odds are too great?**
- **With this story, we see that great struggles can follow great victories. In what ways do you see that to be true in your life?**
- **Elijah is exhausted. What are ways you restore yourself when life is getting the best of you?**

- The angel of the Lord tells Elijah, “The journey is too great for you.” What is it that keeps us from admitting that, in our power, this is always true?
- Rick said, “Sometimes we think, ‘Wow, what an Elijah’ (or any other figure in the Scripture) when we should be saying, ‘Wow, what a God!’ In your study of the Bible, what are ways you have found this to be true?

FINALLY, transition into the *Opening the Word* portion of your time together by saying something like the following:

- **Athletes are known to give God credit when they win. What stands out to me is when an athlete acknowledges God when going through a major defeat. It's hard to remember many, if any, who make a habit of doing so. And yet, in the passage we will study today, it seems clear God wants us to turn to Him in the struggle as much as the celebration. Elijah saw God care for him while he was hurting and exhausted, which reinforced His confidence in God. Is the same true for us? Let's spend some time processing this concept together.**

OPENING THE WORD

Spend time going deeper into a specific concept Rick introduced in the video.

FIRST, explain to your group that you will continue in 1 Kings this week with a study of 1 Kings 19:1-8. Instruct them to find the book, but before you begin to read, provide the context for the passage using the following bullet points:

- **Author:** The author of 1-2 Samuel is unknown. While it's certainly possible that Samuel wrote some of what's recorded in these books, the mention of his death in 1 Samuel 25 means that he didn't write all of it. The books are given the title of "Samuel" because of his prominent role in establishing the monarchy.
- **Time frame:** It's difficult to say for certain when 1-2 Samuel was written. It's possible that they were written and edited over some time. More than likely, they were established in their final form around the 10th century BC.
- **Purpose:** The main theme of these books is God's choosing to accomplish His purposes through the lineage of David and to set up Jerusalem as the location for the Temple. There are many “ups and downs” throughout 1-2 Samuel and David goes through times of obedience and rebellion. He experiences blessings and consequences for sins.

THEN, have a volunteer read 1 Kings 19:1-8. Explain that together you're going to break down this fear-filled moment that Elijah has with the Lord. Lead your group in a brief discussion. Ask:

- **Do you recall anything from previous studies about the false god Baal that the Israelites were worshipping at the time of Elijah? Even if you don't know anything specific about Baal, what do we know about Israel's relationship with false gods in general?**
 - *Answer:* According to the *ESV Study Bible*, Baal is technically not a name but a title, meaning “lord.” The name “Baal” in the context of 1 Kings is likely to be understood as shorthand for the Samaritan false god, Hadad, or Baal Hadad. This false god was believed to be a storm god who influenced the fertility of the land. But in general, the people of Israel were in a not-so-great place with God at this point in history (and, to be honest, in much of the Old Testament). While claiming that God was central to their identity, the nation wove the idols of other faiths into it to get themselves in sync with the rest of the people groups surrounding them.

- Israel was behaving like this: Our God is the ultimate God of history and our people; we need to make sure we pray to false gods for rain and harvest fertility so that we hedge our bets. While we may not worship false gods, we hedge our bets in other ways. Where do you see people acknowledging God but also making an effort to “hedge their bets” according to their own views of the world?
 - Answers will vary.
- Pastor Tim Keller points out, “In the modern era, we asked ‘Do I believe in God. However, in the postmodern era, we ask, “Which god should I believe in?” In what ways do you see people around you in culture asking this question?
 - Answers will vary.
- In the case of Israel worshipping Baal, it’s highly likely that many of them did not believe they had turned away from God. They still worshipped God. They simply worshipped other gods in addition to God. The Israelites turned God into something he wasn’t. They changed their view of His identity (the ONLY true God). Of course, God will not abide being set beside anything, especially a false god. But don’t you see people making the same mistake today? How do people turn God into something He is not, making Him fit their situation?
 - Answers will vary.
- When Elijah wins, Jezebel is furious. She is ready to take Elijah out, asking her gods to kill her if she doesn’t (19:2). Elijah flees. What about this strikes you as odd?
 - Answer: Elijah had just witnessed a major victory-and now none of that seems to matter. Jezebel is a serious threat to his survival; she loves to kill the prophets of God.
- In verse 4, Elijah asks to die because he is "no better than His fathers." What do you think this means?
 - Answer: Elijah refers to Israel as a whole and their fear of the unknown that causes their misguided trust in foreign gods. Though Elijah did not give himself over to anything like false worship, he saw his lack of trust in the Lord as comparable.
- How often are you frustrated with the actions of someone else (“I can’t believe he did that!”) only to find yourself functioning similarly in another area?
 - Answers will vary.
- Look back at verses 5-6. How does God meet Elijah?
 - Answer: The God who loves and cares for us meets Elijah with a gentle hand. The angel could have corrected Elijah. The angel could have offered Elijah advice. However, he did none of those things. He put his hand on Elijah and gave Him a meal.
- What can we learn from this when it comes to how we meet people who are at the end of their rope?
 - Answers will vary.
- Read verse 8. Horeb is a massive landmark for the Jewish people. Mount Horeb is also called Mount Sinai (which should ring a bell). It is the same place Moses met with God and where God does powerful things there in the Scriptures. Elijah would have expected some interaction with God as soon as he realized where God wanted him to go. Do you have a ‘spiritual place,’ a place where God has moved in your life?
 - Answers will vary. Spiritual experiences (men’s retreats, camps, conferences) can be significant for anyone. However, there is nothing special about the place, not even about Mount Horeb. What is special is the God who makes Himself known.

FINALLY, when you have finished, help your group process the fact that God moves differently in Elijah’s life based on where Elijah is. Say something like:

- **God moves boldly in Elijah's life when boldness is needed. He moves gently when gentleness is needed. And he gives Elijah tough love when tough love is needed. God works in the same ways when He ministers to us, as well. God knows what we need when we need it. When we begin to look for God's**

interactions in this way, we can see them for what they are. This should also serve as a challenge to us, to see the people in need around us and to meet them where they are.

ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE

Focus your group's attention on one key takeaway from your time together.

FIRST, explain that you want to challenge the group to focus on the takeaways from this session. Consider starting this portion of your session by asking your group what they think are the main application points from your session. Allow discussion to go until there are no more suggestions.

Then, if necessary, supplement your discussion with the following application points. Say something like:

- **How do God's love and care for you become more evident when you spend consistent time in His Word?**
 - Evaluate how Scripture impacts you when it is present in your life versus when it is absent.
- **What battles are you fighting right now that have you exhausted?**
 - Consider Elijah's exhaustion: God did everything He could do and wiped out the prophets of Baal, and Israel and its leaders were not impressed. How will you respond when God acts in amazing ways, and people act similarly?
- **To close out your time, share some 'Wow! What a God!' moments with one another to encourage and push one another toward Christ-likeness.**

If it feels appropriate, allow some discussion about the kind of processing they find themselves doing.

FINALLY, encourage men to continue to marinate on these points in the week to come. Challenge them to listen to what God is trying to tell them and to respond accordingly. If there are no more questions or input, close your time together in prayer.