



ELIJAH

SESSION I

- **Main Passage:** 1 Kings 17:17-24
 - **Secondary Passage:** Jeremiah 29:13, Romans 10:13
 - **Purpose:** To help challenge me to be willing to plead before the Lord for those under their influence.
 - **Session Snapshot:** As men, God has placed us as leaders and influencers over those around us. That can mean family. That can mean co-workers. That can mean friends. The point is, God has given us a responsibility and opportunity to take the needs of those under our influence and lay them at His feet. As men of God, we should utilize our position to sacrificially go before God on behalf of others.
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GETTING STARTED

Kick off your time together by introducing a new theme or reviewing what you did in the last session.

FIRST, explain to your group that they will be beginning a video series on Elijah that is part of a larger study on looking at the real men of the Bible. Remind men that the Bible is true and the stories in the Bible are true. The men you are studying are real people who lived real lives. Remind your group that God wants us to learn what it means to be in a relationship with Him from the example of these men.

THEN, if this study on Elijah is your first study in the Real Men line of curriculum, consider introducing yourself, if necessary, and having the men in your group introduce themselves. Then, ask for volunteers to share what they want to get out of their time in this study. If you want to pass around a contact sheet or do any other first-session "housekeeping tasks," this is the time to do it.

If this is not your first study in the Real Men line, consider asking men to recap what they remember from the last man you studied together. Ask them what has been the biggest takeaway so far, or to share how the studies you've completed have impacted them.

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, if this is your first study, explain to the group the basic structure of your time together. Explain that you will watch a video that is usually about 15 minutes long, followed by a short discussion of the video. Then, you'll spend a few minutes in Bible study, followed by a closing activity. Consider encouraging men to take notes as they watch the video.

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

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, or consider asking some similar to those below:

- **Do you truly desire to be a man who God utilizes for His plan and purpose? How does this flesh itself out in your day-to-day life? How do you make sure that the plans and purposes of our lives aren't just about us?**
- **Elijah's encounter with this mother and son encompassed the highest of highs (multiplying flour and oil) and the lowest of lows (the death of the son). Think of some highs in your life. Typically, how have you responded to God in these moments? Now, consider the lows and answer the same question: How do you typically respond to God during the low points in your life?**
- **What does your prayer life look like? Don't just pass over that question. Think about it for a minute. As Rick put it, are you covering your family, your children, and your friends in prayer, pleading their case before the Lord?**
- **When you examine your life, what about your relationship with God is moderate or easy? What about it is intimate or sacrificial?**

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

- **Elijah was undoubtedly grateful for the part that the woman and her son had in tending to his needs during the drought that was ravaging Israel. They had become like family. Let's spend a few moments looking more intently at that passage and what we can learn from his intercessory exchange with the Lord.**

OPENING THE WORD

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

FIRST, explain that you're going to take a more in-depth look at 1 Kings 17 and some additional Scripture. As Rick alluded to in the video, God has placed us in a position to advocate for those in our spheres of influence. These passages will help us examine what that looks like.

We must make sure your people have a good understanding of the context of the passage you'll be studying. Provide the context for the passage using the following bullet points:

- **Author:** Ancient Jewish history has Jeremiah as the author of 1 Kings and 2 Kings. However, this view has never been widely supported by scholars. It's best to view the books as a collection of writings with no known author.
- **Time frame:** 1 Kings and 2 Kings are extremely difficult to date because it's a collection of writings that could have been written and edited in stages.
- **Purpose:** 1 Kings and 2 Kings tell the stories of the kings of Israel. These books speak of the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of kings and the impact that a godly leader can have on God's people.

THEN, read or have a volunteer read 1 Kings 17:8-16 to set the background. When you're finished, have a volunteer read 1 Kings 17:17-24. Then, lead the group in a brief discussion. Ask something like:

- **What stands out to you about the initial exchange between Elijah and the woman?**

- Answers will vary. There was no question in the widow's mind that she and her son would eat this last meal and then die because there was no way for them to get more food. Elijah asks her to put her faith in his God, one that, based on her response of "the Lord your God," she did not believe in. She loved her son enough to step out in faith when it seemed all was lost because she had nothing to lose.
- **While nothing in the text implies that the cause of her son's death had anything to do with her sin, the widow did acknowledge her sin before God. Why is this key?**
 - Answers will vary. In any interaction with God, people need to recognize their sin. Here, the widow acknowledges that she has sinned against the one true God. If nothing else, God has revealed Himself to her, and she believes.
- **What can we learn from Elijah's actions and prayer?**
 - Answers will vary. It is clear that Elijah did not understand why God would allow this "calamity" to happen to the people caring for him, yet he did not place blame. We don't know why Elijah stretched out over the child. One explanation is that when a prophet was calling on God to perform a miracle, it involved action and emotion. Elijah saw the need of the widow and the child, and then he made a simple request to God. He wasn't elaborate or ornate with his words. He asked for what was needed. His willingness to go before the Lord on behalf of the widow led her to believe the true Word of God (verse 24).

Before transitioning to the next passages of Scripture, say something like:

- **God heard the voice of Elijah and granted his request. When we surrender to God's will, we get to be used by God as He accomplishes and carries out His will in remarkable ways. Isn't it a great comfort to know that in His omniscience, God knows us and hears our prayers? However, as Rick mentioned in the video, there is a big difference in the prayers God hears from the believer and the unsaved. This is a truth that we find throughout Scripture.**

NEXT, have some volunteers read Jeremiah 29:12-13 and Romans 10:13, Then, ask:

- **What do these verses say about God's willingness to hear out prayers?**
 - *Answer:* Jeremiah 29:12-13 says when we seek God with our whole hearts, we will find Him. Romans 10:13 says everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Of course, this isn't every place in Scripture that describes God's desire to hear our prayers, nor does the Bible say anywhere that God will answer every prayer from a believer in the way they ask. But what these passages (and many others) say to us is that God does indeed listen to the earnest prayers of those who call out to Him.
- **Do our prayers change God's mind?**
 - *Answer:* OK, so this is admittedly a BIG question, one that has provoked meaningful dialogue for centuries. The short answer is no . . . but, yes. In the sense that God is sovereign and all-knowing, our prayers don't TRULY change God's mind. It's not as if God has His will set on a certain outcome that is changed because of our prayers. God's will is God's will and cannot be thwarted or influenced by any human. However, repeatedly in Scripture, especially the Old Testament, God is seen to relent or change directions based on the prayers of His people.
- **So, how do we make sense of this?**
 - *Answer:* What we can confidently say is that God cares deeply about our concerns. If His will seems to relent because of our prayers, we only see it from our perspective. When viewed through the lens of God's absolute sovereignty, we have to conclude that the outcome was His will all along. The role our prayer plays is that we get to be a part of God's working out of His perfect plan. God cares about our concerns, invites us to express those concerns, and then answers our concerns according to His perfect plan for His glory and our good.

FINALLY, begin to close by saying something like:

- **Prayer, specifically the kind of intercessory prayer Elijah demonstrates in the passage we read today, is a way for us to communicate with the one true, sovereign, Holy God. Our communion with Him allows us to be a part of the story that He is weaving. When we pray for others, we get to be a part of their stories too. We get to celebrate the highest of highs with them and be there for the lowest of lows. Intercessory prayer on behalf of those under our influence helps us realize it isn't all about us. It lets us lay aside our selfish nature and place others' needs over our own and before God.**

Ask if there are any questions. If there are none, transition into *Accepting the Challenge*.

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:

- **After listening to Rick and studying these passages of Scripture, the evaluation we need to engage in is in the way we live our lives.**
 - Some of us need to ask, "What does my prayer life look like? Am I consistent? Are my prayers selfish? Am I lifting up to God the needs of those around me?"
- **Some of us need to evaluate how we're embracing our purpose.**
 - We need to ask, "Am I engaged enough with my family and my friends to know what their greatest needs are? What can I do to be more encouraging to them in their time of need?"

Allow the group to consider where they find themselves in these three questions. If it feels appropriate, allow some discussion about the kind of processing they find themselves doing.

FINALLY, encourage men to continue to think about these questions 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.