

Small Group Guide: The Prophet and the Apprentice - Elijah and the Moral Foundations

1 Kings 16:29- 1 Kings 17:7



Summary:

In the prophet Elijah's story, we're challenged to examine the foundations of our faith and society. The lesson of King Ahab and the divided kingdom serves as a stark reminder of how easily we can drift from God's principles when we forget our spiritual heritage. Just as Israel faced consequences for abandoning their covenant with God, we too must be vigilant in maintaining our spiritual foundations. The drought Elijah proclaimed wasn't just a punishment, but a wake-up call - a chance for the people to recognize their dependence on God. This message urges us to consider: Are we, like Ahab, taking God's blessings for granted? Are we compromising our values to fit in with the world around us? It's a call to return to the 'fences' of our faith - the moral boundaries and spiritual practices that keep us grounded in God's truth.

Opening Question:

- What's a rule or tradition you've encountered that initially seemed unnecessary, but later you understood its importance?

Key Takeaways:

1. Our current perspective often blinds us to the foundational principles that built our society.
2. Removing moral foundations without understanding their purpose can lead to societal instability.
3. God sometimes allows difficulties to help us recognize our dependence on Him.
4. The church is called to be a voice of truth, even when it conflicts with popular culture.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does the quote by G.K. Chesterton, "Whenever removing any fence, always pause long enough to ask why it was put there in the first place," relate to our modern society?
2. The sermon compares Israel's moral decay to a structurally unsound building. What are some "foundational pieces" you see missing in our current culture?
3. How do you think Ahab and the Israelites justified their actions despite moving away from God's commands? How might we do the same today?
4. Discuss the parallels between God's discipline of Israel through drought and how parents might discipline children. How does this shape your view of God's character?
5. The sermon mentions that we often justify our actions by our apparent blessings. How can we avoid this trap and maintain a proper perspective on God's blessings?
6. How can the church effectively be "salt and light" in today's world without compromising biblical truth?

Practical Applications:

1. This week, identify one area in your life where you might be compromising biblical principles to fit in with cultural norms. Pray and consider how to realign with God's truth.
2. Research a current societal issue and trace its historical and moral roots. How might understanding its foundation change your perspective?
3. Commit to reading through Deuteronomy this month, paying attention to God's promises and warnings. How might these apply to our lives today?
4. As a group, brainstorm ways your church can effectively communicate biblical truth to your community, especially on challenging topics.

Closing Prayer:

Lord, help us to stand firm on the foundational truths of Your Word. Give us wisdom to discern between cultural shifts that honor You and those that compromise Your truth. Grant us courage to be voices of truth in our communities, always speaking with love and grace. Amen.

5-day Bible reading plan and devotional guide:



Day 1: Foundations of Faith

Reading: Deuteronomy 11:8-17

Devotional:

Just as God promised the Israelites a land flowing with milk and honey, He offers us abundant life through faith in Christ. However, like ancient Israel, we can easily forget the source of our blessings and drift from our spiritual foundations. Today, reflect on the "fences" in your life - the moral boundaries and spiritual practices that keep you grounded in faith. Are you tempted to remove any of these without fully understanding their purpose? Ask God for wisdom to discern between cultural shifts and timeless truths, and for the courage to stand firm on the foundations He has established.

Day 2: Prophetic Voices in a Changing World

Reading: 1 Kings 17:1-6

Devotional:

Elijah stood boldly before King Ahab, speaking truth to power in a culture that had drifted far from God. In our rapidly changing world, we too are called to be prophetic voices - not predicting the future, but courageously proclaiming God's unchanging truth. Consider areas in your life, community, or society where God might be calling you to speak up or stand firm. Pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance and strength to be salt and light, even when it means going against the cultural current.

Day 3: The Danger of Moral Decay

Reading: Revelation 2:18-29

Devotional:

The church in Thyatira was thriving in many ways, yet they tolerated false teaching that led to moral compromise. This serves as a warning that outward success can mask inward decay. Examine your own life and spiritual community. Are there areas where you've allowed worldly influences to erode biblical values? Ask God to reveal any "Jezebel-like" influences that may be subtly leading you astray. Commit to pursuing holiness and truth, even when it's countercultural.

Day 4: God's Provision in Times of Drought

Reading: 1 Kings 17:7-16

Devotional:

When the brook dried up, God provided for Elijah in unexpected ways. In our spiritual lives, we may experience seasons of drought - times when God seems distant or blessings appear scarce. Yet even in these moments, God remains faithful. Reflect on past experiences where God has provided for you in surprising ways. If you're currently in a "drought," ask God to open your eyes to see His provision and presence, even in unlikely places or through unexpected people.

Day 5: Building on the Right Foundation

Reading: Matthew 7:24-27

Devotional:

Jesus concludes His Sermon on the Mount with a powerful illustration about building on a solid foundation. In light of the week's readings, consider the foundation of your own life. Are you building on the shifting sands of cultural trends and personal preferences, or on the solid rock of God's Word and character? Take time to evaluate your priorities, decision-making processes, and sources of truth. Commit to anchoring your life more deeply in Christ and His teachings, knowing that this foundation will withstand any storm life may bring.