

Soul Care: Lessons from the Life of Elijah

Small Group Discussion Guide | Week 1

Series Overview

This guide accompanies the first message in the Soul Care series, which draws lessons for our spiritual and emotional lives from the story of the prophet Elijah found in 1 Kings 17. Elijah was a larger-than-life figure in Scripture, and yet James, the brother of Jesus, reminds us that he was a man just like us, full of real human emotions and real human struggles. His story is an invitation to honest reflection about our own spiritual lives.

Key Takeaways

- Elijah was fully human. He experienced fear, grief, anxiety, loneliness, and depression, and yet he remained faithful to God. Our emotions do not disqualify us from being used by God.
- Spiritual drought is real. Dry times are not always the result of personal sin. Sometimes God allows dry seasons to teach us lessons we could not learn any other way.
- The Kerith Ravine was a place of refreshment and retreat. God sometimes cuts us off from distractions so we can hear His voice more clearly.
- The widow of Zarephath modeled daily dependence. She did not receive a three-year supply of flour all at once. She trusted God one handful at a time, every single morning.
- Two core disciplines emerge from this passage: delighting in the Lord and depending on the Lord. These two practices are deeply connected. The more we depend on God daily, the more our delight in Him grows.

Opening Question

Use this question to help your group ease into conversation before diving into the Scripture.

- Think of a time in your life when you felt genuinely refreshed and close to God. What were the circumstances around that season? What made it feel different from other times?

Scripture Reading

Before beginning the discussion questions, have someone in the group read 1 Kings 17:1-16 aloud.

Discussion Questions

On Spiritual Drought

1. The pastor described spiritual drought as a season of being spiritually dry, emotionally spent, economically empty, or relationally bankrupt. Have you ever experienced a season like that? Without going into more detail than you are comfortable sharing, what did that season feel like?

2. The pastor made the observation that dry times are not always self-imposed. Sometimes they are externally imposed by the actions or apathy of others around us. How does that reframe the way you think about difficult seasons? Does it change how you respond to them?
3. James tells us in James 5:17 that Elijah was a man just like us. Why do you think it is important that Scripture makes a point of emphasizing Elijah's humanity? What does that tell us about how God views and uses ordinary people?

On the Kerith Ravine

4. God sent Elijah to the Kerith Ravine, a place of isolation and quiet, before sending him back out to do more work. The word Kerith means "cut off." In what ways might God use seasons of being cut off from busyness, noise, or routine to do something meaningful in us?
5. The pastor shared that one of his daughters told him during a dry time, "It sounds like you need to spend some time alone with Jesus." How does that land with you? Is solitude and quiet time with God a natural part of your life, or does it feel more like a discipline you have to fight for?
6. Psalm 23:2-3 describes God leading us beside quiet waters and restoring our soul. What does soul restoration look like practically in your own life? What gets in the way of it most often?

On the Widow of Zarephath

7. The widow had only enough for one final meal when Elijah arrived and asked her to give it to him first. What would it have taken for her to say yes to that request? What does her response tell us about the relationship between faith and obedience?
8. The pastor suggested that the miracle of the flour and oil was not a three-year supply delivered all at once, but rather one handful at a time, every single day. How does that picture change the way you think about how God provides? Can you think of a time when God provided for you in small, daily increments rather than all at once?
9. The town of Zarephath means "refinery" in Hebrew. God sent Elijah from a place of refreshment into a place of refinement. What is the difference between those two things? Why might God lead us through refinement rather than simply keeping us in refreshment?

On Delighting and Depending

10. The pastor said, "When God is all we have, we discover that He is all we need." Do you believe that? Is that a truth that has been tested and confirmed in your own life, or does it still feel more like something you hope is true?
11. Lamentations 3:22-26 speaks of God's mercies being new every morning and of the goodness of waiting quietly for the Lord. What would it look like for your group, or for you personally, to build a daily rhythm of thanksgiving and dependence into your week?

Practical Applications

Choose one or two of these to discuss as a group or to commit to individually before your next meeting.

- **Start a delight list.** This week, take ten minutes each morning to write down specific ways God has provided for you, cared for you, or shown His character to you. Do this for seven days and bring your observations back to the group.
- **Identify your brook.** Reflect honestly on whether there is an area of your life where the brook has dried up. A relationship, a sense of calling, your financial situation, your health. Bring that area before God in prayer this week and ask Him what He may be teaching you through it.
- **Schedule silence.** Block out at least one thirty-minute period this week with no phone, no music, and no agenda. Sit quietly before God. You may want to bring a journal. Notice what surfaces.

- **Practice one-handful faith.** Is there an area of your life where you have been waiting for God to show you the whole plan before you take a step? Identify one small act of obedience or trust you can take this week without knowing how the rest of the story unfolds.
 - **Pray for someone in a dry season.** Think of one person in your life who appears to be in a dry time right now. Reach out to them this week, not with answers, but simply to let them know you see them and you are praying for them.
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Closing Prayer

Close your time together by praying through the themes of this week's message. You may use the following as a guide or pray in your own words.

Father, thank You for the times of abundance, but also for the dry times that drive us back to You. Thank You that You are not distant in our droughts. You are present, providing one handful at a time, one morning at a time. Teach us to delight in You and to depend on You, not just when we have no other option, but as the first and deepest habit of our lives. Restore our souls. Lead us beside quiet waters. And may we find that You are all we need. Amen.

Coming Up in This Series

Next week the group will continue through the life of Elijah. Consider reading ahead in 1 Kings 18 to prepare for the next conversation.