

LIGHTHOUSE GROUP CURRICULUM

1 Kings 18:38-19:18

LEADER'S STUDY

The Holy Spirit Empowers the Spread of God's Message

1 Kings 18:38-19:18

What is happening?

In this passage, God's Spirit speaks through Elijah in a multitude of ways to remind the people of Israel that He is the only true God, their Provider, their Lord, their Creator and King. He consumes a soaking wet offering with fire from heaven. He empowers Elijah to outrun Ahab's chariot for over 15 miles. He tenderly provides food and drink for Elijah when Elijah ran in fear from Jezebel. He reveals himself to Elijah not in the windstorm, not in the earthquake, not in the fire, but in a gentle whisper.

Where is the Gospel?

As we read this story, we might be confused. Elijah starts out trusting and obeying God by bravely confronting Ahab, reminding the people of Israel who the only true God is, praying for fire from heaven to consume the offering, killing the prophets of Baal, and boldly asking God to send rain. Then when Jezebel threatens him, he is afraid and flees for his life, sinks into loneliness, despair, and a deep depression, and asks God to take his life. It's as if the weight of the world is on his shoulders, and if we're honest, we've felt this way too. We forget who God is and everything He has done, and we forget that *He* carries *us*, not the other way around. We think we're doing all the work: we take pride in anything we define as success, but quickly sink into fear and despair when things appear to go poorly.

God's Spirit CAN act in power and might, but He also chooses to speak in gentle whispers, and work through people He appoints. His power is made perfect in our weakness, and His grace is powerfully on display even in the midst of our failures and sinfulness. Just because we can't always see how He's working doesn't mean He has abandoned us. It is much more likely that we are simply blind to His presence and ignorant of His ways. Because of Jesus' sacrifice, we can now all have an intimate relationship with God, and the Holy Spirit living inside of us. Just like Elijah, we have a choice: we can believe God is in control and will redeem us from ourselves, and then obey whatever it is the Spirit is leading us to do, or we can run away in fear. Regardless of what we choose, rest assured that God's plan will be done, with or without us. He doesn't need us, but He gives us the privilege of working with Him. As you prepare for this week, ask yourself questions like these: How is God calling me to depend on Him more? How is God calling me to respond based on this scripture?

Spend some time reading and meditating on these truths as you prepare for your meeting. Be willing to share this with your group and invite them to join you in sharing how God is asking them to respond to His word. Be willing to share areas that He is calling you to "follow Him" and make clear "I" statements about how you are going to align with Him.

Some helpful scriptures: 1 Samuel 10:6; 2 Kings 6:15-18; Isaiah 11:2; Isaiah 61:1-3; Acts 8:26-40; 2 Peter 1:20-21

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INTENTIONAL BIBLE READING

READ 1 Kings 18:38-19:18
and meditate on it.

Read in the ESV or similar word-for-word translation. Read it again in the NLT to get a thought-for-thought perspective.

Try to summarize the passage in your own words.

Compare/contrast how you see the Spirit working in Elijah in this passage with how the Spirit works through Philip in Acts 8:26-40, and how you see the Spirit working through you today.

POTENTIAL STUDY QUESTIONS

These are just questions you might ask to help your group discussion. Don't feel like you need to answer all of these as a group

What seems to be the main point of this passage?

Why would the Spirit work through Elijah in so many different ways?

How does the Holy Spirit display God's grace and jealous love us?

Which is more impactful to you: fire from heaven consuming Elijah's offering, or the gentle whisper Elijah hears at Mount Sinai?

Will we choose to trust the Spirit's wisdom in choosing when to act in power and when to act gently?

What did you discover or learn about God and His character from this passage?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

How can I seek the Holy Spirit to empower me to share the gospel?

Do I value life with the Spirit?

Who is the Holy Spirit leading me to reach out to?

How is God calling you to obey, based on this passage?

With whom are you going to share what you have learned?

(This is a critical part of growth that is often overlooked. If we can share it with someone else it means we really understand it, it cements it in our own minds, it makes us accountable to the truth and it blesses the one who hears it. Rom 10:17)

Based on this passage, what can we pray about and how should we pray?