

Elijah

Discussion Guide

Week of August 20, 2023 - **"God Works!" (Where is God placing you to be a light for Him)**

Scripture verse: 1 Kings 18:16-40

LOOKING BACK:

1. At our previous meeting, we saw how God not only provided for Elijah by hiding him from Jezebel and giving him food and shelter, but he provided for the widow and her son because she trusted Elijah and the promise of the God.
 - a. As you have examined your life recently, where have you seen God at work providing for you? What situation had an unexpected resolution, or what need was miraculously met?
 - b. How has increasing your prayer life changed your view of God's provision? Has he revealed to you a plan to provide for someone else through you?
2. Open your group discussion with prayer asking for the Holy Spirit's intervention to bring clarity to God's word as it is studied today along with willing hearts to obey.

OPENING QUESTION:

The following is a summarization of an illustration given at a youth conference several years ago: A young girl bought an imitation pearl necklace that she dearly loved. It made her feel particularly grown up and special when she would wear it. One day her father asked, "Do you love me?" To which the young girl replied, "Yes, Daddy. You know I love you." Her father then asked, "Then will you give me your pearls?" The

girl answered, "Not my pearls! You can have my toy horse instead." Her father shook his head and reminded her he loved her. About a week later, the father once again asked the young girl for her pearls but she again refused to give them up, offering yet another toy. This continued for some time. Eventually, the girl began to wonder why, if he loved her, did her father want her to give up her beloved pearls? Then one day, she tearfully walked up to her father and offered her imitation pearls, telling him, "Here. These are for you." As the father reached out to take the imitation necklace, he reached into his pocket to hand her a velvet box. Inside the box was a strand of genuine pearls which he had lovingly and carefully chosen for her. He had them all along but was waiting for her to give up the cheap imitation strand so that he could provide her with something far better and more beautiful.

There are lots of places in our lives where we are willing to accept counterfeits in place of the real thing. **In what areas of your relationship with God are you settling for less than a genuine, devoted relationship with Him?**

LOOKING UP:

We are now 3 years or so into Elijah's story and God has asked him once again to step out of the shadows and try again to bring the truth of who God is to Ahab. Remember, King Ahab was an evil man, whose misguided heart was led even further astray by an evil wife. Together they had introduced false gods and evil practices to the people of Israel, who were being led like sheep to the slaughter.

The people of Israel were probably a lot like us today. And, like us they were probably often strongly influenced by those people with whom they surrounded themselves, and the people they looked up to. This simple human tendency had led God's people to forsake the Lord and begin worshipping other gods. God had watched it all unfold and finally

drawn the line: He called upon Elijah to be the conduit to prove He was, and is, and always will be the One true God.

1. Why do you think we are so easily led astray by other people?
Recalling a time in your life when you went with the crowd rather than standing firm in your beliefs, what was the primary factor that caused you to drift?
2. Has there been a time that you stood firm for what you believe?
What were the results or consequences?
3. Before moving into the study passage, ask someone in the group to pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance and help in providing courage and wisdom to stand firm in the face of negative influences. Ask for three group members to prepare to read the passage 1 Kings 18:16-40 (have one person read v. 16-21. Have the second read v. 22-29. Ask a third person to read v. 30-40) Answer the first two questions after the passage is read in one version. Then re-read the passage in a second version (have three other people read as before since it's a large section) and answer questions 3 and 4.

READ THE PASSAGE
1 Kings 18:16-40

Answer the first 2 questions after reading the passage

1. What stood out to you most?
2. What was challenging or hard to understand?
3. What does this teach us about God?
4. What does this teach us about people?

RE-READ THE PASSAGE

Read the passage again using another Bible translation... then answer the last 2 questions

LOOKING FORWARD:

Let's be completely transparent about the obvious here: God didn't need Elijah to prove that He is God. But the people would have missed

the point **if He hadn't made a huge show**. Not only did this method prove His power and sovereignty, but further proved the trust and worship that had been given to those other gods had been obviously misplaced. He used Elijah to shine a light into the darkness and reveal what was hiding there. In the same way, He uses each of us to break into dark areas in our lives and the lives of those we love.

- a. Identify some of the areas in your life where compromise, the accepting of counterfeit beliefs and influences, has allowed darkness to overtake your thoughts, words and behaviors. Are there places you need to open the door and let the light of Jesus shine in? Are you clinging to a strand of fake pearls that your Heavenly Father has asked you to hand over to Him? If so, let go! He will fill that void with something much more valuable than what you release!
 - b. If you are being honest, you may feel like God is calling you to shine a light into someone else's world, to make Him known to a friend or family member, but you feel inadequate to accept the mission. Rest assured that God can and will still use you to shine a light into someone else's darkness. Are you resisting God's request to take a stand and shine His light into the world?
2. If you leave this discussion still thinking it is someone else's job to preach and teach others, consider how you came to believe in God and chose to follow Christ. Were you brought to that decision because of a sermon a preacher gave from the stage or pulpit, or was your decision based on the influence of someone you knew. Chances are, whoever that person is, they were far from perfect but still chose to take up God's call to shine His light into the lives of others.

Encourage your group to prayerfully consider who God is calling them to be a light to? Where is He calling them to be a messenger for Him? Then pray, asking the Holy Spirit to bring to mind a someone or

someplace He is asking each member to be His messenger. Ask Him to reveal the dark places in their lives that need light, and give them courage to accept God's call to be sent out to others.