2026-11-18 Small Group Guide

Small Group Guide
"What Are You Doing Here?" — A Study in Discouragement, Restoration, and Faithful Service
Based on 1 Kings 19 and Luke 9:28-36

OVERVIEW

This session explores the story of Elijah's flight from Jezebel and his encounter with God at the mountain of Horeb. Drawing parallels with Moses and the Transfiguration account in Luke 9, this guide will help your group wrestle honestly with discouragement, failure, self-disqualification, and what it means to remain in God's service even when you feel like you have nothing left to give.

KEY SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

1 Kings 19:7-18 — God restores Elijah at Horeb
Exodus 33 — Moses asks to see God's glory
Luke 9:28-36 — The Transfiguration

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Walking with God is anything but predictable. When we assume we can predict what God will do, we set ourselves up for discouragement when He works differently than we expected.

God does not disqualify us — we disqualify ourselves. Elijah declared himself the only one left and ready to die. God's response was not condemnation but restoration and a new assignment.

God is often found in the whisper, not the spectacle. The wind, the earthquake, and the fire were dramatic, but God's presence came in the gentle whisper. Authentic worship seeks God's truth and presence, not an engineered emotional experience.

Failure is not the final word. Both Moses and Elijah felt washed up. Both removed themselves from service. God called both of them back — and

ultimately used them to minister to Jesus himself at the Transfiguration.

We are called to faithful service until death, not until retirement. The call of God on a believer's life does not expire with age, failure, or exhaustion.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
Opening — Getting Honest

Think of a time when something did not go the way you expected it to — in your faith, your family, or your work. How did that unmet expectation affect your attitude toward God or toward other people?

Have you ever talked yourself out of doing something you believed God was calling you to do? What reasons did you give yourself?

Digging In — The Story of Elijah

In 1 Kings 19, God asks Elijah twice, "What are you doing here?" Elijah gives the same answer both times. What does that tell you about how deeply Elijah was stuck in his own perspective? Have you ever found yourself repeating the same complaint to God without really listening for His response?

Elijah says, "I am the only one left." God eventually corrects him by revealing that 7,000 others have not bowed to Baal. How does isolation — whether physical or emotional — distort the way we see our situation? How can community help correct that distortion?

God did not appear in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire — but in a gentle whisper. Why do you think we are often more drawn to dramatic experiences of God than to quiet, steady ones? What does it look like practically to cultivate a sensitivity to God's "gentle whisper" in your own life?

After Elijah's honest but discouraged response, God does not scold him. Instead, He gives him rest, food, and a new assignment. What does this tell you about how God handles our moments of burnout and despair? How does this challenge or encourage you personally?

Going Deeper — Moses, Elijah, and the Transfiguration

Both Moses and Elijah had defining moments of failure — Moses struck the rock in anger, Elijah ran in fear and begged to die. Yet both appeared in glory at the Transfiguration, ministering to Jesus. What does it say about God's character that He chose these two specific men for that moment?

The sermon makes the point that God qualifies the called rather than calling the qualified. Where in your own life have you seen that principle at work — either in yourself or in someone you know?

At the Transfiguration, Moses and Elijah spoke with Jesus about His coming death. Their own experiences of hardship, failure, and God's faithfulness equipped them to encourage Him. How might your own struggles and failures — rather than disqualifying you — actually be the very thing that equips you to minister to someone else?

Reflecting on Worship

The sermon raises a concern about churches and individuals seeking to manufacture an experience of God's presence rather than genuinely seeking Him in spirit and truth, as described in John 4:23-24. How do you personally distinguish between authentic worship and performance — in a church setting and in your private life?

The sermon asks the congregation to pray regularly for the church's worship — that it would not be about impressing people but about genuinely seeking God. How seriously do you take your role as a praying member of your church body? What would it look like to be more intentional about that?

Personal Application

Where in your life right now are you most tempted to say, "I'm the only one left," or "I've already failed — God can't use me anymore"? How does this passage speak directly to that place?

God told Elijah, "Go back the way you came." Sometimes restoration means returning to the place or the calling we ran away from. Is there anything in your own story that God might be asking you to return to?

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

The following are concrete steps group members can take this week in response to the sermon.

For the discouraged: Spend time this week in quiet — not filling the silence with noise, music, or distraction — and simply ask God, "What are you doing here in my life right now?" Write down what comes to mind.

For those who feel disqualified: Write down one specific way you have told yourself that God cannot use you. Then find one passage of Scripture that speaks to God's ability to restore and redeem, and place it somewhere you will see it daily.

For those in a season of spiritual dryness: Identify one person in your life who is also struggling. Rather than waiting until you feel strong enough to help, reach out to them this week. Your shared experience of struggle may be exactly what they need.

For the whole group: Commit to praying for your church's worship and leadership by name at least once before your next gathering. Pray specifically that your church would pursue spirit and truth rather than spectacle.

For everyone: Reflect on the question the sermon raises about faithful service. Ask yourself honestly: Have I mentally "retired" from serving God in some area of my life? What would it look like to re-engage?

CLOSING THOUGHT

Elijah ran hundreds of miles from the place where God had used him mightily. Moses spent forty years in the wilderness convinced his best days

were behind him. Yet God was not finished with either of them — not in their lifetimes, and not even after. If God can bring two men who felt like failures back into His service to minister to His own Son, there is no version of your story that is beyond His reach. The question He is still asking is the same one He asked Elijah at the mouth of that cave: What are you doing here?

CLOSING PRAYER

Close your time together by praying for one another in the specific areas of discouragement, failure, or self-disqualification that surfaced during your discussion. Ask God to restore each person present to the calling He has placed on their life, and ask Him to make your group a community that restores rather than excludes those who feel they have fallen short.