

ELIJAH NOTES

Week 5

Day 1

The big idea of this day is about being intentional to mature and strengthen our relationship with God. Priscilla parallels the intentionality of Elijah's actions- repairing the altar of 12 stones and following God's specific orders regarding dousing the altar three times with water, with the intentionality we need to utilize in our daily lives. We can get derailed so easily from our walk with Christ if we are not intentional about it.

When you spend time bobbing in the ocean, you never come back to shore in front of your beach towel- you have drifted along the shoreline without even realizing it. In the same way, if we are not being intentional about moving closer to God in our thoughts, behavior and plans, we will by nature drift away- the world, Satan and our flesh work against us at all times, without us realizing it. We are either working to move closer to God or we are drifting away from Him. What specifically stood out to you and the ladies in your group?

Day 2

In this day we talk about standing alone. We are given a chance to look at different people in the bible who stood alone: Caleb and Joshua, Esther, Daniel, Peter, the lady with the perfume and the bleeding woman. Priscilla makes a good distinction: sometimes we have to create distance from ourselves and those opposed to us, and sometimes we have to create distance between us and other Christians who have become apathetic, lukewarm and watered-down in their commitment to God.

We cannot be afraid to be alone. There are worse things than being alone! And there are some benefits in being alone- in solitude, we can draw close to God. I love that quote in the margin of page 162. Standing alone for Jesus makes you tough. It bonds you to God. It makes you able to be bold in the future. When have you stood alone for Jesus? Where might you need to step out on your own and make a statement that you are unashamed of the gospel, and fully devoted to Christ?

Day 3

In this day we discuss the often-overlooked power of prayer. The opening story is great: God does not change, but we do. Our prayer journals reveal that! When the world is jumping on the bandwagon in support of the cause- we cannot forget to pray! It is the one thing we cannot be hindered from, and it is our best shot in changing the world. Everyone can pray powerfully in the name of Jesus that the gospel would be reflected in the lives of His creation.

Priscilla points out a few things:

- When we pray, we should ask, "how will God be glorified in doing what I am asking Him to do?" Priscilla offers some great prayers in Nehemiah 9:5-8 and Daniel 9:4 that women can look to for help.
- When we pray, our goal is to strengthen our relationship with God, not to just go to Him and ask for stuff. Do you spend time with your kids so they can ask you for stuff? Or do you spend time with your kids so that they know how much you love them? It is true that part of loving our kids is providing for their needs- but that is not the top objective of why we spend time with them. Same thing with us and God.
- When we pray, we want God to refine us into better instruments to share His truth, so that they will return to Him. Our motivation should be to save the lost.

Day 4

I have to admit, when I first heard the video for this week, and heard Priscilla warn us not to "start our own fire" I was not really clear what she was saying. I am a planner and definitely put a lot of leg work into my plans. After hearing, "don't light your own fire", I wondered if the line between responsible living and giving God "room to work" could be a little fuzzy for women. When I read the sentence on page 175, I understood better what Priscilla was getting at: like her, we need to recognize our tendency to overwork and under-pray or overproduce and under consecrate. I feel like this statement cleared up my confusion as to what she was saying. In anything, God supplies the power, we just have to be faithful to do live in faithful obedience. Learn to let God be God in the right areas of your life and ministry.

Day 5

I see two key questions arising from Day 5, and they are both tough questions:

- Why would a loving God kill large groups of people?
- What, spiritually speaking, do I need to kill in my life that is leading me into spiritual decay and decline?

I hope some great discussion can come from the second question. In regards to the first question, I have attached an article that hopefully gives some insight.

*The fact that God commanded the killing of entire nations in the Old Testament has been the subject of harsh criticism from opponents of Christianity for some time. That there was violence in the Old Testament is indisputable. The question is whether Old Testament violence is justifiable and condoned by God. In his bestselling book *The God Delusion*, atheist Richard Dawkins refers to the God of the Old Testament as "a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser." Journalist Christopher Hitchens complains that the Old Testament contains a warrant for "indiscriminate massacre." Other critics of Christianity have leveled similar charges, accusing Yahweh of "crimes against humanity."*

But are these criticisms valid? Is the God of the Old Testament a "moral monster" who arbitrarily commands genocide against innocent men, women, and children? Was His reaction to the sins of the Canaanites and the Amalekites a vicious form of "ethnic cleansing"? Or is it possible that God could have had morally sufficient reasons for ordering the destruction of these nations?

A basic knowledge of Canaanite culture reveals its inherent moral wickedness. The Canaanites were a brutal, aggressive people who engaged in bestiality, incest, and even child sacrifice. Deviant sexual acts were the norm. The Canaanites' sin was so repellent that God said, "The land vomited out its inhabitants" (Leviticus 18:25). Even so, the destruction was directed more at the Canaanite religion (Deuteronomy 7:3-5; 12:2-3) than at the Canaanite people per se. The judgment was not ethnically motivated. Individual Canaanites, like Rahab in Jericho, could still find that mercy follows repentance (Joshua 2). God's desire is that the wicked turn from their sin rather than die (Ezekiel 18:31-32; 33:11).

Besides dealing with national sins, God used the conquest of Canaan to create a religious/historical context in which He could eventually introduce the Messiah to the world. This Messiah would bring salvation not only to Israel, but also to Israel's enemies, including Canaan (Psalms 87:4-6; Mark 7:25-30).

It must be remembered that God gave the Canaanite people more than sufficient time to repent of their evil ways—over 400 years! The book of Hebrews tells us that the Canaanites were "disobedient," which implies moral culpability on their part (Hebrews 11:31). The Canaanites were aware of God's power (Joshua 2:10-11; 9:9) and could have sought repentance. Except in rare instances, they continued their rebellion against God until the bitter end.

But didn't God also command the Israelites to kill non-combatants? The biblical record is clear that He did. Here again, we must remember that, while it is true the Canaanite women did not fight, this in no way means they were innocent, as their seductive behavior in Numbers 25 indicates (Numbers 25:1-3). However, the question still remains: what about the children? This is not an easy question to answer, but we must keep several things in mind. First, no human person (including infants) is truly innocent. The Scripture teaches that we are all born in sin (Psalms 51:5; 58:3). This implies that all people are morally culpable for Adam's sin in some way. Infants are just as condemned from sin as adults are.



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Second, God is sovereign over all of life and can take it whenever He sees fit. God and God alone can give life, and God alone has the right to take it whenever He so chooses. In fact, He ultimately takes every person's life at death. It is not our life to begin with but God's. While it is wrong for us to take a life, except in instances of capital punishment, war, and self-defense, this does not mean that it is wrong for God to do so. We intuitively recognize this when we accuse some person or authority who takes human life as "playing God." God is under no obligation to extend anyone's life for even another day. How and when we die is completely up to Him.

Third, an argument could be made that it would have been cruel for God to take the lives of all the Canaanites except the infants and children. Without the protection and support of their parents, the infants and small children were likely to face death anyway due to starvation. The chances of survival for an orphan in the ancient Near East were not good.

Finally, the children of Canaan would have likely grown up sympathetic to the evil religions their parents had practiced. It was time for the culture of idolatry and perversion to end in Canaan, and God wanted to use Israel to end it. Also, the orphaned children of Canaan would naturally have grown up resentful of the Israelites. Likely, some would have later sought to avenge the "unjust" treatment of their parents and return Canaan to paganism.

It's also worth considering the eternal state of those infants killed in Canaan. If God took them before the age of moral accountability, then they went straight to heaven (as we believe). Those children are in a far better place than if they had lived into adulthood as Canaanites.

Surely, the issue of God commanding violence in the Old Testament is difficult. However, we must remember that God sees things from an eternal perspective, and His ways are not our ways ([Isaiah 55:8-9](#)). The apostle Paul tells us that God is both kind and severe ([Romans 11:22](#)). While it is true that God's holy character demands that sin be punished, His grace and mercy remain extended to those who are willing to repent and be saved. The Canaanite destruction provides us with a sober reminder that, while our God is gracious and merciful, He is also a God of holiness and wrath.

