

## For the Family

Read together 1 Kings 18:20-39 (or tell the story from memory).

**Explain** that many of the Israelites, including the King and his wife, worshipped a god named Baal, instead of God. A prophet named Elijah challenged them to choose between Baal and God.

Elijah set up a contest. He challenged the priests to put a bull on an altar as a sacrifice. He told them to call out to Baal to burn the sacrifice, but when they did, nothing happened. They did all kinds of wild things for most of the day, but still nothing happened.

Elijah then set up his altar. He arranged the wood, and put the bull on top. He had people pour water on it until everything was soaked and even running over. Then he prayed, and immediately a fire came and burned up the bull, the wood, the water, and even the stones that made up the altar.

The people fell on the ground and said, "The LORD, he is God, the LORD, he is God."

**Talk together** that the reason Baal couldn't answer was because he wasn't real. No matter how loud the people prayed, no matter how hard they worshipped, they would never hear from Baal, because he wasn't real.

The reason God could answer was because he is real; he is alive, and he wants very much for people to know him.

Elijah didn't pray a fancy prayer, and he didn't do all kinds of wild things to get God to answer. He prayed a simple prayer, with faith and confidence, and he waited for God to answer.

Now when we pray we might not get a fire from heaven, but God is real and God does care, and he wants to answer our prayers. We can learn to pray like Elijah, with faith and confidence.

**Pray together** that you will always call upon the name of the Lord, and that you will never call upon other gods. Pray that you will have faith and confidence when you pray, and that you will be able to wait for God's answer.

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## Elijah: The Showdown at Carmel Profiles in Faith

**1 Kings 18:16-46**

We opened our series *Profiles in Faith* with a look at the faith of **Abraham**. God called Abraham to leave his home. Abraham followed God, even though he didn't know where he was going. He was called a child of God and his faith was credited to him as righteousness.

When David was confronted about his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of her husband Uriah, he immediately repented, confessing clearly, "*I have sinned against the Lord.*" He also wrote Psalm 51 as a complete confession of his great sin.

**Last Week:** Joshua called upon the people to choose whom they would serve. Would they serve God, or would they serve the gods of the culture around them? Each generation faces that choice. And each generation has the responsibility to pass on their faith to the next generation.

**This Week:** Elijah was called by God to speak truth to the power of a corrupt king and a corrupt priesthood. While enduring a three-year drought, most of the people had turned to worship the false god Baal. Elijah called the people out, and put on a great contest to show that God was alive and powerful, while Baal was dead and powerless.

### Open

1. Can you think of a time when you accepted a dare from someone? What was it? How did it turn out?
2. What's the biggest contest or game you have been a part of?

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## The Challenge

16-24

1. Why do you think King Ahab and his wife Jezebel worshipped Baal?

2. Why does Ahab call Elijah a “troubler of Israel”? 16

Why does Elijah think Ahab was the real troubler?

3. What is Elijah’s challenge to the people? 21  
Why do you think they responded this way?

5. What does Elijah propose? 23-24

6. Why is fire used as the determining factor?  
See Leviticus 9:20-10:2; Exodus 19:17-18

7. Who is risking the most in this contest: Ahab or Elijah? Why?

## Baal 25-29

1. Why does Elijah let the Baal priests go first? 25

2. What do they say when they call out to Baal? 26

3. What is the response to their call?

4. How does Elijah mock them? 27

Is this mocking tone the way you would think that prophets of God would normally behave? Why or why not?

5. What do the priests do next? 28-29

What does this show us about their religion?

## The Lord 30-40

1. What does Elijah do to prepare? 30-35

2. What does Elijah say to God? 36-37

3. How does God respond? 38

4. How do the people respond? 39

Do you think this is a genuine or superficial response? Why?

## The Rain 41-46

1. Is there a relationship between the sacrifice, the people’s response, and the end of the drought?

2. Is Ahab being given a chance to repent?  
What does that show you about God?

## Reflect

1. Do you ever find yourself “limping” or “wavering” between following God and following the gods of your culture?

What would it take for you to follow God completely and confidently, even during the droughts of life?

2. Power, class, style, and possessions can become gods to us if we worship them. What can you do to make sure you aren’t seduced by the modern version of Baal?

3. Does God ever give you extra strength to do his will?  
What kind of strength do you need right now in your life?

## Take-aways

Share with the group your take-away from your time together.

## Next Steps:

- This week my words and actions will confess to those who are close to me, my confidence in Jesus Christ.
- I will examine any doubts that have held me back from confident faith in Jesus Christ.
- I will trust God even when trials come that don’t make sense to me.

## Memory Verse – 1 Kings 18:37

*Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back.*