

1 Kings 19: 9-18

February 12, 2023



INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Tell students about the grandest gesture you have ever made. This could be a prom or marriage proposal, something you did to pledge for a fraternity, painting your chest for a football game, or a surprise gift for someone special. Share why you did it and how it worked out. As time allows, ask for examples of when they have made grand gestures.

There's a lot of pressure these days to make grand gestures. We see it in the halls of high schools around the country, with people trying to outdo each other with the best "promposal." There's nothing wrong with grand gestures, but the thing is, you can pull off the greatest "promposal" your school has ever seen but later break up with that person and take someone else to the dance.

Compared to being there for another person daily, a grand gesture doesn't mean much. It's flashy, but there's greater substance found in a quiet and consistent presence. Still, we like grand gestures. We want the impressive picture and video evidence for our Snapchat story or Instagram post. It's as if we think it doesn't really count if we can't show it off to the world. And if we're not careful, that way of thinking can affect our relationship with God.

Here are some questions to think about:

Do you look for God more in grand gestures or quiet whispers?

Can you worship Him if there is no band, smoke, and lights?

Can you study His Word if there's no big screen or movie clip to illustrate the passage?

Do you hear Him in the day-to-day, or does something huge have to happen in your life for you to listen?

Are your prayers mostly asking God to do something big for you, or are they about thanking Him for what He's already done and what He's still at work doing?

Do you rely mostly on other people and youth group experiences to hear the voice of God, or do you hear Him even when no one else is around?

Our answers to these questions have huge implications.

DISCUSSION

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 1 KINGS 19:9-18.

In your own words, what happened in this passage?

Could God have spoken to Elijah in the wind, earthquake, and fire? Why do you think He didn't?

What situation in your life would you like for God to show up in a spectacular way? Why?

In your experience, does God answer us more often in grand displays or in quiet whispers? Why do you think He does that?

What voices are competing for your attention right now? What are some things you can do to shut out the voices that are not God's?

Do you ever have a hard time hearing from God? What do you think causes that?

Do you listen to God yourself, or do you depend on other people (like a minister or parent) to speak on His behalf?

What's the danger in depending completely on other people to hear from God?

What's the danger in never listening to other people to hear from God?

Can you worship when you're home alone, or does that only work when you're at church and there's a band? What are some benefits of private worship, just between you and God?

APPLICATION

When is it easiest for you to hear from God? If "when I'm at church" is your only answer, what are some steps you can take so that "when I'm at home by myself" is an answer, too?

Think about the situation you named earlier, where you'd like God to show up in a big way. Is it possible He wants you to hear Him in a gentle whisper instead? What do you need to do to listen for that whisper?

How has God already shown Himself to you in the grandest of gestures? (Hint: Jesus!) Why is that one gesture enough? How do you need to respond to the grand gesture of Jesus going to the cross to die for your sins?

PRAYER

Praise God because He is extraordinary and has shown Himself to you in the grandest of ways. Ask Him to help you seek His extraordinary character in the quiet, ordinary moments of life.

COMMENTARY

19:9. God, who had spoken to Moses and Israel at Horeb centuries before, spoke to Elijah. He asked Elijah what he was doing at Horeb. While we might think God spoke to Elijah in a stern, accusing manner, He probably did not. God knew what Elijah had been through. Out of His great compassion, God encouraged Elijah to tell Him exactly what he was thinking. Of course, God knew.

19:10. Elijah held nothing back. He told the Lord he had been very zealous for Him. By contrast, the Israelites had rejected God's covenant, destroyed altars dedicated to the worship of God, and killed God's prophets. Elijah thought he alone remained of all God's prophets, and Jezebel had turned her full attention to killing him too. As Elijah reflected on his ministry, he could see nothing but a great investment of time and commitment for God that had produced little results.

19:11-13. God first reveals His presence to Elijah in His greatness and power, but He did not speak from that position. The Lord instead spoke to Elijah in a soft whisper, showing Himself to be a God who communicates via a still, small voice as well as powerful displays.

19:15-16. God's commands first pointed to judgment. Elijah was to anoint Hazael as king over Aram, Jehu as king of Israel, and Elisha as his own successor. God was still controlling events. **19:17.** This command indicated the extent of God's judgment—death at the hands of Hazael, death at the hands of Jehu, and death even at the hands of Elisha through His pronouncements of judgment.

19:18. The second part of God's response gave hope. God still had 7,000 people through whom He could work in the future.