

ADULT STUDY GUIDE

Unit 6: God Restores His People



ADULT STUDY GUIDE

This is the adult component of the Enduring Faith Bible Curriculum. This piece follows the **same scope and sequence** as the other levels: **Early Childhood, Elementary, and Youth**. This alignment presents some amazing opportunities.

- First of all, it helps all ages speak a **common theological language**.
- Second, it helps God's people build an understanding of the **lifelong nature of learning God's Word**—that we don't just learn the narratives once or twice before moving on to other matters.
- Third, and critical to this curriculum, it helps **equip households** to teach the faith at home.

If parents and other adults spend time meditating and discussing the narratives of the Bible while the younger generations in the congregation study the same narratives, then there will be greater opportunity throughout the week to **reflect together** upon what the narrative says and what it means. In other words, studying the narratives of the Bible as adults is a blessing in and of itself, but it also helps **equip parents and faith leaders** to be more confident and feel empowered to extend those conversations into the household.

FEATURES OF THIS STUDY

This study guide is meant to provide some guidelines and springboards for discussion in your Bible study groups.

- The **first page** of each lesson provides the central focus statements, not only for the Adult level, but also for the other levels. Use this as a way to orient yourself to the **main themes and goals** of the lessons across all levels. You'll also find helpful **tips for preparation**.
- The **middle two pages** begin with an introductory **"Launch"** section, which provides prompts for beginning the study and an open-ended reflection question to kick off group discussion. The following **"Learn & Live"** section breaks down the text into three to five narrative sections. Each one of these sections has some additional commentary, a reflection question, and some helps to better understand possible answers to the reflection question. The **"Leave"** section provides prompts for a final reflection question and some other considerations to close the lesson. The **sidebars** include leader tips and bonus activities to help you think through options for extending the lesson.
- The **final page** of each lesson is the student piece. Copy one lesson handout per learner, and distribute this at the beginning of class.

TIPS FOR USE

This study guide is designed primarily to help give you, the leader, some thoughts and prompts to help guide and assist facilitation of the class. Below are some tips for how to use it.

- This is meant to be a Bible study, so each learner will need access to a Bible. Encourage your learners to bring their own to class.
- Don't neglect the lesson handout. The primary reason for this page is to create some space for each learner to reflect and engage the questions on his or her own. Often, any given group will have one or two vocal learners and others who may not speak up. Consider using techniques to help engage all learners in the process, such as having each learner write down his or her reflection privately before sharing, having each learner share with a partner before opening up discussion, or changing the seating arrangements to create small groups.
- Use the opening reflection question as a time to build community. Adult learners, generally speaking, desire to share their experience with one another, and this lesson starter provides an opportunity for this.
- For each narrative section, ask volunteers to read the text aloud while the rest follow along. Don't force anyone; adults, like children and youth, may be self-conscious about their reading or public speaking ability.
- Download the Enduring Faith Page from the online digital resource center and hand out copies to your learners. Near the end of the lesson, talk through the prompts, which help the learners extend the lessons in their households throughout the week. Encourage learners to take this page home along with the lesson handout to be used throughout the week.

PROVIDED-FOR PROPHET

God
Provides
for Elijah
1 Kings 17
874–853 BC

BIBLE TRUTH

God provides all we need.

LEARNER GOAL

I can compare God's provision during the time of Elijah to how He provides for my needs today.

BIBLE VERSE

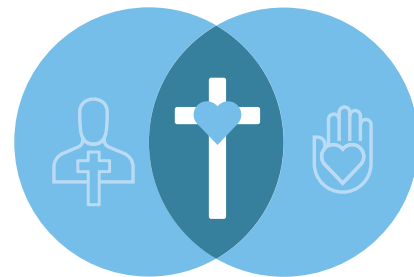
He provides food for those who fear Him; He remembers His covenant forever. Psalm 111:5

LAW & GOSPEL

In sin, I complain that God does not give me what I need or deserve. **Through His Son, God daily supplies me with all good gifts to sustain me in body and soul.**

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

The prophet Elijah warns King Ahab of the severe drought coming. God first sends Elijah to the brook Cherith, where He provides ravens to feed him. When the brook dries up, Elijah lodges with a widow in Zarephath. Despite her limited supply of flour and oil, it never runs out. God supplies just what they need each day. When the widow's son dies, Elijah raises him back to life through God's power.



CONNECTING IDENTITY & CALLING

IDENTITY: WHO AM I?

God makes me His own through His Word and Sacraments.

CALLING: WHY AM I HERE?

I can trust God to give me everything I need to fulfill my vocations in life.

GROWING IN FAITH FOR LIFE

See how this lesson builds on learning for each age.

ADULT

I can compare God's provision during the time of Elijah to how He provides for my needs today.

YOUTH

I can give examples of how God provides for all of my physical and spiritual needs.

ELEMENTARY

I understand that God gives me all that I need.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

I know God provides what I need.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read the narrative and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible (TLSB)*.

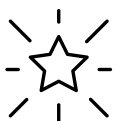
MORE TIME Look over the map and notes on page 558 in *TLSB* for more context with specific locations in Israel and Judah.

IN DEPTH Read **1 Kings 16** for more context regarding the bleak religious landscape of Israel leading up to Ahab.



LEADER NOTE

Financial and physical needs or struggles will vary for your learners, based on a lot of different considerations, so be mindful of the social and economic factors within your group. That said, the heart of the question is whether prayer is easier or more difficult in stressful financial times. Consider having learners share their thoughts in pairs or small groups first. There are no right or wrong answers here, as it is personal, but this question should get them thinking about their attitudes toward God's provision.



BONUS ACTIVITY

If you have time, consider looking over the setup to Ahab's reign by reading **1 Kings 16:29–34**. Then, discuss what made Ahab's reign so egregious to God, including doing evil, marrying the pagan daughter of a foreign power, worshiping false gods, and allowing Jericho to be rebuilt.

LAUNCH

WELCOME

Welcome the group and open in prayer. You can take prayer requests, though this can be done at the end of the lesson too.

REVIEW

Review the Bible Truth, Bible Verse, and Learner Goal. Then, begin with the opening question.

OPENING REFLECTION

Is prayer easier or more difficult for you when financial problems arise? Why is that?

LEARN & LIVE

1 KINGS 17:1

BIBLE COMMENTARY

In the Northern Kingdom of Israel, things had gone from bad to worse. Omri had ruled a long time, expanding the borders of the kingdom, fortifying Samaria's walls, and doing great evil against the Lord. His son Ahab not only inherited a prosperous kingdom but also increased in wickedness against God. He married Jezebel, a pagan Phoenician princess, and turned wholly to worshiping Baal and Asherah, the fertility gods of the land. He even went so far as to allow the rebuilding of Jericho, violating a command God explicitly gave through Joshua hundreds of years before (Joshua 6:26). Into this, God calls Elijah, the prophet, to speak His Word to Ahab. The land will suffer due to Ahab's rejection of the Lord, and Ahab ultimately will have to listen to God's Word. Much of the rest of the Book of 1 Kings will be dedicated to exploring how God works through Elijah during the troubled times that follow.

REFLECTION QUESTION

Given that Ahab is a wicked king who does not follow the Lord, what lesson is God teaching Ahab through Elijah?

REFLECTION HELPS

God makes it clear that His Word and His Word alone gives protection and life to God's people. This is a lesson from which God's people today can learn.

1 KINGS 17:2–7

BIBLE COMMENTARY

God tells Elijah to depart from Samaria and hide in an obscure location, the brook Cherith, on the east side of the Jordan River. There, he will be safe, for a time, from Ahab and Jezebel as God's judgment on Israel plays out. While Elijah hides for survival, separated from his family and former life, God provides for him. Amid the drought, Elijah's brook provides water. In the midst of the famine that follows the drought, God sends ravens who bring Elijah bread and meat to eat in the morning and in the evening. Even when all seems lost and bleak, when God speaks, His Word provides.

REFLECTION QUESTION

What, do you imagine, would it have felt like to be Elijah during this time? What impact might this have had on his faith and trust in the Lord?

REFLECTION HELPS

On one hand, God tells Elijah to hide for his life, so Elijah likely felt some fear. On the other hand, God miraculously provided food and water for Elijah while he was hiding, so Elijah likely also felt thankful and cared for. Regardless, God was increasing trust and reliance on the Lord within Elijah during these hard times. God would use Elijah's resilience in the future.

1 KINGS 17:8–16

BIBLE COMMENTARY

God directs Elijah to leave his hiding place, cross the Jordan, and go to the small coastal city of Zarephath in Sidon, located just to the north and west of Israel. This is an interesting location, as it is part of Phoenicia—the same kingdom from which the wicked queen Jezebel came before marrying Ahab. Here, the effects of the regional famine are felt. Yet even here, the name and the words and works of the Lord are known. As Elijah approaches the gates of the city, he sees a widow gathering sticks to cook her last meal and asks her for water. When she brings the water, he asks for a morsel of food—to which she replies she has little and what she has she plans to use as a last meal for herself and her son before dying of starvation. Yet her statement, “As the LORD your God lives,” reveals her likely knowledge that Elijah only an Israelite and also shows that she has some degree of faith in the God of Israel. Elijah tells the woman not to worry, but instead to use what she has to make him some food, and the Lord will provide for her. Amazingly, this non-Israelite listens to the voice of the Lord and makes Elijah bread, and the Lord miraculously multiplies her stores for many days.

REFLECTION QUESTION

What, do you suppose (with clues from the text), was the reason the woman trusted Elijah here? What can we learn from her example?

REFLECTION HELPS

Though she was not an Israelite, she knew of the Lord. When God’s Word came to her through the mouth of His prophet, she trusted that God’s Word would work, and it did. One thing we can trust is that God’s Word accomplishes what it says it will, even when we don’t immediately see it.

1 KINGS 17:17–24

BIBLE COMMENTARY

Disaster strikes! The woman’s son dies while Elijah is in the house, and the widow questions whether Elijah’s presence is God’s judgment. Elijah takes the boy and cries out to God for an answer, pleading with God to restore his life. Stretching himself out on the boy three times, Elijah prays and pleads, offering his own body and life as instruments of God’s healing work. And God hears! God restores life to the boy. At this, the widow not only rejoices but also confesses that Elijah is a man of God and that God’s Word is truth. God demonstrates His ultimate power over all creation, even death.

REFLECTION QUESTION

What does this, the first instance of a miraculous resurrection in the Bible, reveal to us about God’s ultimate care for His people?

REFLECTION HELPS

God cares for the needs of our bodies, but even in times of lack or suffering, we know His plans for His people are greater than their ills. Our deaths matter to God, and He has the power to overturn death. In Christ, God has promised us a new creation and resurrection from the dead.

LEAVE

FINAL REFLECTION

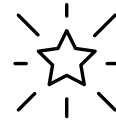
Compare God’s provision during the time of Elijah to how He provides for our needs today.

TAKE HOME

Equip your learners with ideas for taking the lesson into their households by giving them access to the Enduring Faith Pages.

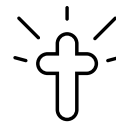
CLOSE WITH PRAYER

If you haven’t yet, take prayer requests, or encourage a volunteer from the class to pray as you prepare to leave.



BONUS ACTIVITY

Elijah and Elisha’s miracles, in many ways, are some of the most spectacular of the Old Testament, and many of Jesus’ miracles share qualities of them. Consider challenging your learners to look for examples of Jesus multiplying food and raising the dead in the New Testament; then, discuss what the Jews in the New Testament might have thought of Jesus’ miracles being so similar to the great prophets of the Old Testament.



CHRIST CONNECTION

God provided for and through Elijah. Through Christ, God has provided for all our eternal needs, including forgiveness, life, and salvation.



LEADER NOTE

God supplies all I need to live, yet even when times are difficult, God has promised me eternal gifts in Christ. He sustains my faith with His life-giving Word for now and eternity.

PROVIDED-FOR PROPHET

ADULT
Unit 6
LESSON HANDOUT
Lesson 1

BIBLE TRUTH

God provides all we need.

LEARNER GOAL

I can compare God's provision during the time of Elijah to how He provides for my needs today.

BIBLE VERSE

He provides food for those who fear Him; He remembers His covenant forever. Psalm 111:5

God Provides for Elijah

1 Kings 17

REFLECTIONS

OPENING REFLECTION Is prayer easier or more difficult for you when financial problems arise? Why is that?

1 KINGS 17:1 Given that Ahab is a wicked king who does not follow the Lord, what lesson is God teaching Ahab through Elijah?

1 KINGS 17:2-7 What, do you imagine, would it have felt like to be Elijah during this time? What impact might this have had on his faith and trust in the Lord?

1 KINGS 17:8-16 What, do you suppose (with clues from the text), was the reason the woman trusted Elijah here? What can we learn from her example?

1 KINGS 17:17–24 What does this, the first instance of a miraculous resurrection in the Bible, reveal to us about God’s ultimate care for His people?

FINAL REFLECTION Compare God's provision during the time of Elijah to how He provides for our needs today.

NOTES

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CONSUMING FIRE

Elijah and the
Prophets of Baal
1 Kings 18:17–40
874–853 BC

BIBLE TRUTH

God shows us His power.

LEARNER GOAL

I can express how God shows His power in the narrative and what that means for His people today.

BIBLE VERSE

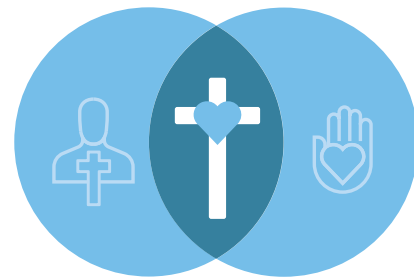
And this is eternal life, that they know You, the only true God. John 17:3

LAW & GOSPEL

God demands that I fear, love, and trust in Him alone, yet I sinfully place my trust elsewhere. **Jesus proves that He is the true Lord—offering Himself as the sacrifice for sin.**

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

Elijah challenges the people to stop “limping” between Baal and the true God. Gathering the 450 prophets of Baal, Elijah proposes a test to determine the truth: each side will butcher a bull for sacrifice and call on their god to send down fire. The prophets of Baal call upon their god, even cutting themselves to appease it, but nothing happens. Elijah drenches his offering with water, completely filling the trench around it. Then Elijah offers a simple prayer to the true God, who sends down fire from heaven to consume the offering, the wood, and even the water in the trench.



CONNECTING IDENTITY & CALLING

IDENTITY: WHO AM I?

God reveals Himself to me through His Word.

CALLING: WHY AM I HERE?

I can trust God to demonstrate His power over sin and evil through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

GROWING IN FAITH FOR LIFE

See how this lesson builds on learning for each age.

ADULT

I can express how God shows His power in the narrative and what that means for His people today.

YOUTH

I can identify examples of God’s work in creation.

ELEMENTARY

I understand that God is all powerful.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

I know God is the true God, and I praise Him.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read the narrative and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible (TLSB)*.

MORE TIME Read **1 Kings 18:1-16** in *TLSB*.

IN DEPTH Read the article “Making a Prophet” in *TLSB*, page 555.



LEADER NOTE

For the opening reflection, consider having each learner write down his or her definition independently first, then share it with a partner or a small group. Some may be embarrassed to share, so try to keep things light by saying this is simply an opportunity to start thinking about the idea. Then, once people have shared, consider looking up a definition online or in a dictionary and comparing it with those of the group. This shouldn't take long but may help to hook your learners into thinking about what God's power might mean before moving into the narrative.



BONUS ACTIVITY

The text is a bit shorter this lesson, so if you have time, you might also consider reading through **1 Kings 18:1–16** together before digging into the text. Then, consider Obadiah and his hopes and fears during the drought, as well as how that helps build the narrative that happens in the lesson.

LAUNCH

WELCOME

Welcome the group and open in prayer. You can take prayer requests, though this can be done at the end of the lesson too.

REVIEW

Review the Bible Truth, Bible Verse, and Learner Goal. Then, begin with the opening question.

OPENING REFLECTION

What is your definition of the word *power*? How does it compare to the definitions of others?

LEARN & LIVE

1 KINGS 18:17–24

BIBLE COMMENTARY

After Elijah had waited three years, either in hiding or in exile in Phoenicia, the Word of the Lord again comes to him. This time, God commands Elijah to reveal himself to Ahab, and God will show His power by returning rain to the land. Elijah does so, returning to Ahab not only to accuse Ahab of faithlessness to God but also to offer a challenge. In this, before all the people of Israel, Elijah and nearly one thousand false Canaanite prophets who eat at the king's table will each call upon their deity to show their powers. Though unequal in number of prophets, the goal of both sides is the same. Both Ahab and the people agree to the challenge. God will demonstrate before all of Israel not only the dire sin of idolatry but also how He alone is the one true God.

REFLECTION QUESTION

From the text, what are some of the different reasons why God issued this confrontation between Elijah and the prophets of Baal and Asherah? What can we learn from this for our lives today?

REFLECTION HELPS

Answers may include that God wanted to demonstrate His power, the consequences of Ahab's sin, the wishy-washy unbelief of the people, and His authority as the one true God. We, too, should watch ourselves, lest we emulate the sins of Ahab by following false gods or becoming wishy-washy in our confession of faith. We should instead cling to God's Word of truth in all things.

1 KINGS:18:25–29

BIBLE COMMENTARY

The hundreds upon hundreds of prophets of Baal prepare their sacrifice and call out to their false god. He does not answer. They limp and cry out and even cut themselves until blood gushes out, presumably to show their god their commitment and self-sacrifice for him. Yet he is silent. Elijah mocks their futile cries, jesting that perhaps Baal is using the bathroom or on a journey, and that is why he does not answer. But the prophets and the people learn the truth: Baal doesn't answer because he is not there. He is not the true God. After all the preparation, the prophets of Baal are bleeding and exhausted, and they have nothing. There is no answer. Baal does not and cannot pay attention.

REFLECTION QUESTION

What words or phrases from this section reveal the futility of worshipping false gods? How do people today act in similarly foolish ways?

REFLECTION HELPS

Answers include they "limped," "cried out," and "cut themselves" but with no response. They had no answer to the mocking of Elijah. Today, people sacrifice so much of themselves and their resources worshipping idols like money, power, and pleasure—to their own destruction.

1 KINGS 18:30–35

BIBLE COMMENTARY

It is now Elijah's turn to prepare the altar for his Lord. He gathers the people close and prepares an altar where they are on Mount Carmel. We have little to go on as to when and why that particular altar was once erected, but God now demonstrates through its rebuilding how He desires His people to reestablish true worship. Elijah rebuilds it with twelve stones, representing the whole of the twelve tribes. He digs a trench around the altar, then cuts and orders the wood and bull in the way of proper, God-ordained priestly sacrifice. Then, likely using water from the nearby Mediterranean, orders dousing after dousing of the wood, sacrifice, and altar so that everything is saturated and drenched, filling the trench. This sacrifice should not burn and will be consumed only by a supernatural power: the power of God Himself.

REFLECTION QUESTION

What are some symbolic details from the text concerning the altar of the Lord? What might these represent in demonstrating God's power?

REFLECTION HELPS

Elijah rebuilds an altar using twelve stones that represent the twelve tribes of Israel. He cuts the wood and prepares the bull, laying these on the altar in a priestly fashion and pours large amounts of water on it all three times. God wants to demonstrate a rebuilding of worship in Israel, refocusing on the priestly sacrifice and leaving no doubt that He is all powerful.

1 KINGS 18:36–40

BIBLE COMMENTARY

Elijah offers a prayer, recalling God's promises to the patriarchs and alluding to God's ultimate plan of salvation for His people that their hearts may be turned back to Him. At this, fire from the Lord descends and consumes the sacrifice, vaporizing even the stones, wood, and dust! At this miraculous, terrifying, and awe-inspiring sight, the people fall on their faces in repentance. God has demonstrated His power and will now demonstrate His justice against the false prophets. Elijah has the hundreds of prophets of Baal rounded up, and he takes them to a nearby brook and slaughters them there. God is all powerful. He holds all things in His hands, yet still chooses to sustain His plan of salvation for stiff-necked, rebellious people like the Israelites—for people like you and me.

REFLECTION QUESTION

Identify the different ways God showed His power in this passage. What do they show us about who God is?

REFLECTION HELPS

God showed His power through Elijah's recollection of His promises to the patriarchs, through the fire from heaven, and through the slaughter of the pagan priests. God is all powerful, righteous, and not to be trifled with; yet He is also patient with His people and faithful to His promises.

LEAVE

FINAL REFLECTION

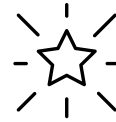
Express how God showed His power in the narrative and what that means for His people today.

TAKE HOME

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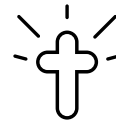
CLOSE WITH PRAYER

If you haven't yet, take prayer requests, or encourage a volunteer from the class to pray before you leave.



BONUS ACTIVITY

If you have time, ask your learners to consider how God works His power in His people today, either individually or in groups. Then read **Romans 1:16**. Consider the different means by which God delivers those powerful Gospel promises to us today: the written Word and the Sacraments.



CHRIST CONNECTION

God demonstrated His power over Baal in the confrontation on the mountain. Christ demonstrated His power over sin, death, and hell on the mount of Calvary.



LEADER NOTE

God revealed His power not only through the miraculous fire but also through the prayers of Elijah, by the overthrow of the prophets, and by turning the hearts of His people back to Him. God's Word still works in the world as He turns hearts back to Him and disrupts the lies of the devil.

CONSUMING FIRE

BIBLE TRUTH

God shows us His power.

LEARNER GOAL

I can express how God shows His power in the narrative and what that means for His people today.

BIBLE VERSE

And this is eternal life, that they know You, the only true God. John 17:3

Elijah and the Prophets of Baal

1 Kings 18:17–40

REFLECTIONS

OPENING REFLECTION What is your definition of the word *power*? How does it compare to the definitions of others?

1 KINGS 18:17-24 From the text, what are some of the different reasons why God issued this confrontation between Elijah and the prophets of Baal and Asherah? What can we learn from this for our lives today?

1 KINGS:18:25-29 What words or phrases from this section reveal the futility of worshiping false gods? How do people today act in similarly foolish ways?

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