

ALTARS

Title: ALTARS

Date: January 14, 2024

Leader's Notes:

1. Start and end the life group on time.
2. Facilitate discussions with your group and **give all attendees opportunities to share their thoughts**. Encourage participation.

Life Group Discussion Proper

WORSHIP: (15 mins)

Option 1: In person - Home gatherings

Suggestions: Assign someone to lead worship or play two praise & worship songs from You Tube.

Option 2: In person gatherings at a public place (at the park, school campus or café) or Online home gathering (via Zoom or other online meeting platform)

Suggestions: Ask three to four people to share testimonies of answered prayers or ask the question: Ask the group, "What are you thankful to God about this past week?"

Main Text: I Kings 18:20-24, 30-39 NLT

Q: Have you ever been in a competition where you thought all odds were against you (you were the underdog and your opponent was the crowd favorite) but you eventually emerged as the winner?

Intro: Elijah proposed a challenge to Ahab and the prophets of Baal to determine who the true God is between Yahweh and Baal. Each group would present a sacrifice on their altar to their respective god, and the god who answers by fire will be acknowledged as the true god. All the advantages were on the side of Baal's prophets (450 prophets) and 400 prophets of another false god. To prove his case, Elijah made it more difficult for him to win! In the end, Yahweh didn't just prove Himself to be the only and true God, He responded to Elijah who approached His presence the right way.

WELCOME:(15 mins): IWC - Introduce yourself. Welcome guests/first-time visitors. Cheerfully call someone to do the same.

Ice-breaker: Ask the group and give time for participation.

Q: Was there ever a time that you were confronted about what you believe as a follower of Jesus and you needed to stand by or defend your faith in God?

WORD (30-45 mins)

Three things we can learn about Elijah's Altar:

1. Elijah repaired the altar of Yahweh – Read vv.25-32

Elijah restored the nation of Israel's prescribed way of worshipping God which is to be in right relationship with Him. This was the number one priority in order to go back to God. Repentance through rebuilding Yahweh's altar is the way back to God.

In the same way with us, only faith or trust in Jesus Christ, who paid for the penalty of our sins on God's altar which is the Cross. This is the prescribed way of God for us to approach Him through repentance and surrender.

Discussion Questions:

Q: How about us, is there anything we need to surrender or lay on the altar, the Cross?

Q: Is there anything hindering us to surrender our struggles, our pain, our sins before the Lord?

Continuation:

2. Elijah's confidence was in God – Read vv.32-35

Elijah didn't do things out of confidence in human ways of approaching God, His confidence was in God and His ways. We have read how he prepared the altar differently compared to the prophets of Baal. The sacrifice was drenched with water, the altar was overflowing with water and filling the trench he had dug around the altar! His faith was totally in God. (Q: What is Faith? **Read:** Hebrews 11:6)

Many approach God today contrary to His prescribed way. At the root of this is pride. Many times we pride in ourselves and in our abilities more than we trust in God. Our trust and confidence should only be on God alone. Where we put our confidence in, that's where we will be willing to risk everything.

Discussion Questions:

Q: What do you think made Elijah confident during that "showdown" with the prophets of Baal?

Q: How about you, when you're in a difficult and overwhelming situation, what gives you confidence in approaching God in prayer?

3. Elijah was willing to risk it all for God – Read vv.20-24

The confrontation between Elijah and the prophets and followers of Baal was a life-and-death situation; the prophet who lost would face death. The big problem with the Israelites wasn't necessarily that they were aligning with Baal; rather, they were indecisive and noncommittal to any deity. They were "*fence-sitters*," engaging in prayers and rituals for both gods, hoping to benefit from either one or whichever blessed them the most. Their loyalty easily shifted, as they were primarily motivated by personal gain.

Read v.21, "*Then Elijah stood in front of them and said, "How much longer will you waver, hobbling between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him! But if Baal is God, then follow him!" But the people were completely silent.*"

Eventually, at the end of the showdown, Yahweh revealed Himself as the true God and the prophets of Baal and Asherah were all killed. Faith in Jesus is not for **fair-weather** worshippers, following only when it is convenient and comfortable. To trust Jesus, is to make Him Lord of all. For God's true worshippers, it's all or nothing.

Discussion Questions:

Q: What do you think would keep followers of Jesus from risking it all for God?

Q: How about in your life, would following Jesus Christ really worth risking all?

Read Revelation 3:15-16 and see what our Lord Jesus has to say on this matter.

Conclusion: In our present time, worshipping God is still divided between two kinds of altars: one for our Lord Jesus and another for alternative gods. Even if many say they're believers in Christ, some may still worship on altars not in line with Scripture, some are based on human efforts and others are motivated by comfort and convenience. During our Prayer and Fasting week, we will build our Altars before God! Our prayers will be our sacrifices on the altar. Most of all, our lives will be the living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to our God. **Read Romans 12:1-2.**

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST TAKE-AWAY FROM THE LESSON?

Tell your group to partner with someone and ask this question to their partner.

Q: What impacted you the most from this lesson?

WORK: The Challenge & Closing prayer (15 mins.)

1. Memorize a verse from your devotions this week and be prepared to share it on our next gathering.
2. Please take time in your smaller groups to pray for one another. If there are specific needs, take time to lift them up to God in prayer as well. Ask each other, "**what can I pray for you?**"

Leader's Notes:

1. Please remind your group of your next gathering and ask them to invite a friend.
2. Please encourage the group to remember to pray for one another during the week.
3. Assign someone to share from his/her devotion to the group next week. (*min. of 5mins.*)