

Life Group Discussion Guide

Finishing the Race Well

(2 Kings 2:1-15)

August 23 and 24, 2025

1 Kings 19:15-17 (ESV)

¹⁵And the LORD said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. ¹⁶And Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place. ¹⁷And the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha put to death.

Exodus 34:7a (ESV)

⁷...keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty

Question #1

Dr. John MacArthur said, "*Through these three men, Yahweh completed the execution of Baal worshippers that Elijah had begun*". In effect, the point was while someone might escape Syria, or even Israel, they would not escape God (through Elisha). Do you think in today's world, God still views sin in as serious a way? What correlation do you see between God's approach in **1 Kings 19** and what He will do at the end of time?

2 Kings 2:1-3 (NLT)

¹When the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were traveling from Gilgal. ²And Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, for the LORD has told me to go to Bethel." But Elisha replied, "As surely as the LORD lives and you yourself live, I will never leave you!" So, they went down together to Bethel. ³The group of prophets from Bethel came to Elisha and asked him, "Did you know that the LORD is going to take your master away from you today?" "Of course I know," Elisha answered. "But be quiet about it."

Genesis 5:24 (ESV)

²⁴Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

Hebrews 11:5 (ESV)

⁵By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken, he was commended as having pleased God.

Question #2

The text does not tell us how Elisha nor the prophets knew that God was going to take Elijah away. But Elijah becomes the second man in Scripture who was translated from earth to heaven without first seeing death (**Gen. 5:24**). Though we may never know, explore why you think God may have taken both Enoch and Elijah this way.

Hebrews 12:1-2 (NLT)

¹Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. ²We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne.

Hebrews 10:23 (NLT)

²³Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep His promise.

Question #3

"Faithfulness is not about short bursts of energy. It's about consistent steps over a lifetime" (Pastor T.K. Anderson). In **Hebrews 12:1**, the Greek word for the idea of *stripping off* every weight (ἀποτίθημι [Gr.], *apotithemi*), carries the general meaning of laying or putting aside. But more specifically, in this text, it carries more the meaning of *getting rid of vices*. Explain how holding onto vices and being faithful are incompatible. Or are they compatible?

2 Kings 2:4-5 (NLT)

⁴Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, for the LORD has told me to go to Jericho." But Elisha replied again, "As surely as the LORD lives and you yourself live, I will never leave you." So, they went on together to Jericho. ⁵Then the group of prophets from Jericho came to Elisha and asked him, "Did you know that the LORD is going to take your master away from you today?" "Of course I know," Elisha answered. "But be quiet about it."

Psalms 78:4 (NLT)

⁴We will not hide these truths from our children; we will tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the LORD, about His power and His mighty wonders.

Deuteronomy 6:4-7 (ESV)

⁴"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

Question #4

Elijah previously left another servant before going into the wilderness (**1 Ki. 19:3**) and now his newest servant, Elisha, refused to be left behind (**2 Ki. 2:2,4,6**). *"As in analogous cases, we regard it rather (Ruth 1:8, 11, 12; Luke 9:57–62; John 21:15–17),*

*as a means of testing fidelity.*¹¹ In finishing well, Elijah apparently tested his successor, making sure he was a man of determined faith. How do you currently or how have you previously trained those who came behind you? Why is teaching in various conditions important? (**Deut. 6:4-7**)

2 Kings 2:6-11 (NLT)

⁶Then Elijah said to Elisha, “Stay here, for the LORD has told me to go to the Jordan River.” But again Elisha replied, “As surely as the LORD lives and you yourself live, I will never leave you.” So they went on together. ⁷Fifty men from the group of prophets also went and watched from a distance as Elijah and Elisha stopped beside the Jordan River. ⁸Then Elijah folded his cloak together and struck the water with it. The river divided, and the two of them went across on dry ground! ⁹When they came to the other side, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me what I can do for you before I am taken away.” And Elisha replied, “Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit and become your successor.” ¹⁰“You have asked a difficult thing,” Elijah replied. “If you see me when I am taken from you, then you will get your request. But if not, then you won’t.” ¹¹As they were walking along and talking, suddenly a chariot of fire appeared, drawn by horses of fire. It drove between the two men, separating them, and Elijah was carried by a whirlwind into heaven.

Numbers 11:24-25 (ESV)

²⁴So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD. And he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tent. ²⁵Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it.

Ezekiel 36:26-27 (ESV)

²⁶And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 (ESV)

²¹And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, ²²and who has also put His seal on us and given us His Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

Question #5

On two other occasions prophets caused waters to be divided and walked across dry land (**Ex. 14:21-22; Josh. 3:14-17**). But no one had ever been taken up to heaven in a whirlwind of fire. In addition, Elisha requested something from Elijah which *only God could give* (**2 Kings 2:9-10**). And in this transfer of power, Elisha asks for שְׁנַיִם (a Hebrew word which means *two; both; double*); he wanted twice the amount of Elijah's spirit. In a very real sense, the most important thing any of us could ever give someone

¹ Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History: Old Testament*, vol. 6 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975), 96.

is some essence of who we are. Why is this important and is there a correlation in what God does for us?

2 Kings 2:12-15 (NLT)

¹²Elisha saw it and cried out, "My father! My father! I see the chariots and charioteers of Israel!" And as they disappeared from sight, Elisha tore his clothes in distress. ¹³Elisha picked up Elijah's cloak, which had fallen when he was taken up. Then Elisha returned to the bank of the Jordan River. ¹⁴He struck the water with Elijah's cloak and cried out, "Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?" Then the river divided, and Elisha went across. ¹⁵When the group of prophets from Jericho saw from a distance what happened, they exclaimed, "Elijah's spirit rests upon Elisha!" And they went to meet him and bowed to the ground before him.

2 Timothy 4:7-8 (NLT)

⁷I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful. ⁸And now the prize awaits me—the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on the day of his return. And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to his appearing.

Question #6

"Elijah's faith didn't end with him. His faith multiplied through the one who came after him...Think of a relay race...they pass the baton, they trust the next runner, they lean on the team" (Pastor T.K. Anderson). When Christ saved us, His intent was for us to *pay it forward*, so to speak. What are you currently doing to reveal Christ, so that others can join the relay of life? Like the prophets above, do others recognize that you are a follower of God, and that His Spirit rests upon you?

Five-Day Devotional

Day 1: Live Faithfully before God

Scripture: Read **Habakkuk 2:4**

⁴"Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him; but the righteous will live by his faith. (NASB)

The sentiment which the prophet Habakkuk expresses here is echoed on at least three other places in the New Testament (**Rom. 1:17**; **Galatians 3:11**; **Heb. 10:38**). It is rare to find an idea repeated *so frequently* in the Word. As this idea is about *living*, and our ultimate goal is to be

with God forever, and since the gift provided to us by Christ is *everlasting life*, let us spend the time today, reading through all of these texts, allowing the weight of their meaning to wash over us.

Reflection: I know that before Your face, no one can stand who is not righteous. Many may want everlasting life, but may want it on their own terms. But You have declared through Your prophets, only the righteous, only those who have been justified (made right before Your eyes, though they didn't deserve it), can step into Your presence and be accepted. The key to enter is true faith in the One You sent: Jesus Christ.

Day 2: Leave a Lasting Legacy

Scripture: Read **Proverbs 13:22**

²²A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, and the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous. (NASB)

Innumerable texts speak of the role of the importance of instilling biblical principles in multiple generations (**Deut. 4:9; Ps. 78:4-6; 2 Tim. 1:5**). God is interested in having a godly seed on the earth (**Mal. 2:15-16**). And it is important to note, that from God's perspective (considering the Malachi text), leaving a godly legacy must have as its beginning point, *marriage*. While God can redeem anyone, whether they come from a broken home or not, God's ideal is that children will come from marriages made to honor Him.

Reflection: Oh, my Lord God, not only do You save us for eternity, but You can save us now, too! Help us as Your Church, to do away with the norms of the world, when it comes to relationships! Help us to do things Your way. Help us to sacrifice for one another. Help us to think about more than meeting our own individual desires, and instead think of our spouses, our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

Day 3: Lean Fully onto God

Scripture: Read **Proverbs 3:5-7**

⁵Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. ⁶In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. ⁷Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and turn away from evil. (NASB)

In following God we must remember there can be no split allegiances. We cannot be followers of Christ, while simultaneously follow our own way. While none of us follow perfectly, the idea is to commit to the daily, diligent, duty, of being discipled by the Divine Deliverer. How do we do it while being so imperfect? By continually going back to the foot of the Cross (**Lk. 9:23**).

Reflection: You call me, Lord, to give all my heart, all my ways to You. To reverence Your Name. Help me by ridding me of duplicitous ways (Ps. 86:11). Help me to operate like all of me belongs to You, because all of me does.

Day 4: Learn What Pleases God

Scripture: Read **Ephesians 5:7-10**

⁷Therefore do not be partakers with them; ⁸for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light ⁹(for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), ¹⁰trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. (NASB)

We *were* darkness, but *now* are Light! And on this basis we are called to operate in accordance with the truth of who we are!! But the sweet part comes in verse 10 where the apostle encourages us to keep trying to figure out how to please God. Yes, we are to make it our daily goal, to discover *new things* about our Maker, and *new approaches* to take towards Him. What is the goal? To bring Him glory.

Reflection: *Let me not lose sight of the fact that You are infinite, I am finite. Who You are can never be exhausted, therefore, I should revel in how many beautiful things I can discover about You, my Lord and my God.*

Day 5: Love God Only

Scripture: Read **Luke 10:27**

²⁷And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." (NASB)

Even though we are called to love our neighbors, to love ourselves, this is not the starting place for love. We are told elsewhere that God is love (**1 Jn. 4:8**). Since He is love personified, we must give ourselves wholly unto Him if we are to discover how to express love appropriately elsewhere.

Reflection: *Despite what the world would say, 'Love is love', we know that this is not only untrue, it also is circular, having no real meaning. Since, Lord, You are the Creator, I must return to You alone to find balance and true identity. Help me to know who You truly are so I can know who I truly am.*