

Ahab said to Elijah, "So you have found me, my enemy!" "I have found you," he answered, "because you have sold yourself to do evil in the eyes of the LORD. He says, 'I am going to bring disaster on you. I will wipe out your descendants and cut off from Ahab every last male in Israel—slave or free. I will make your house like that of Jeroboam son of Nebat and that of Baasha son of Ahijah, because you have aroused my anger and have caused Israel to sin.'"

1 KINGS 21:20-22



CONNECT

What is the most interesting interaction you've ever had with a snake?

What have you seen in the news this week that confirms the reality of evil?



WATCH

Watch the video for this session, Below is an outline of the key points covered during the teaching. Record any key concepts that stand out to you.

OUTLINE

I. We often play with temptation as if it were a pet or something we can control.

- A. We have an enemy of our souls, Satan, and we do ourselves no favor by dismissing him as a myth.
- B. God commands us not to give Satan a foothold in our lives (see Ephesians 4:27)
- C. Satan's aim is always to "steal and kill and destroy" (John 10:10)

II. Elijah took evil seriously, even though the culture around him did not.

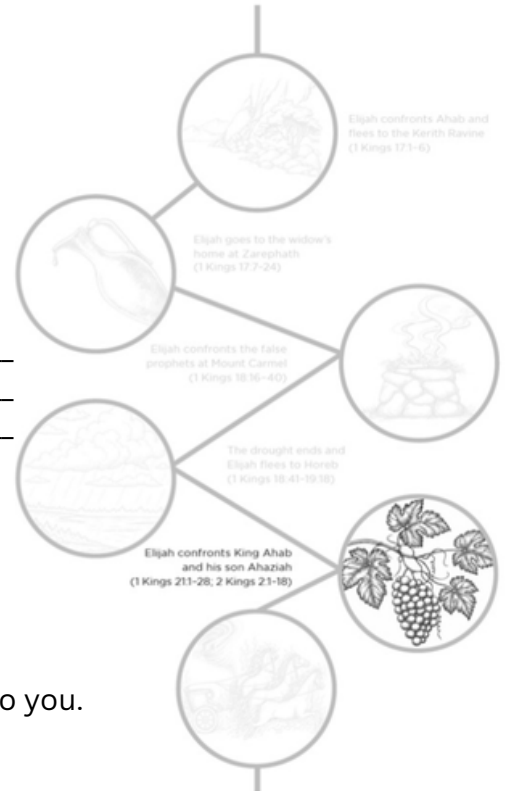
- A. Ahab and Jezebel continued to rebel against God and lead the people astray.
- B. The final straw came when they had a man killed so they could steal his vineyard
- C. The couple's inability to see the value in human life was diabolical, disgusting and demonic.
- D. A steadfast faith includes a healthy respect for God's righteous anger

III. God demonstrated his mercy when Ahab repented.

- A. Elijah's verdict against Ahab and his family shook the king - and he repented
- B. God responded to Ahab's gesture of humility by postponing the verdict.
- C. We can't make the mistake, however, of believing God's patience is his ignorance.
- D. God's justice ultimately came because Ahab and Jezebel continued in their sin.

IV. We must take evil seriously if we want to live for God in a faithless world.

- A. When Ahaziah came to power, he maintained the evil and idolatry of his parents.
- B. Elijah did not shy away from standing up to Ahaziah's sin and declaring God's judgement against him.
- C. The same God who empowered Elijah will empower us to confront evil.
- D. We have weapons Satan cannot match-prayer, worship and the Word.
- E. We can refuse to cavort with the enemy and, instead, choose to be strong and courageous in the Lord.





Session 5: Don't Kiss The Snake



Discuss

Discuss what you just watched by answering the following questions.

1. Think about the concept of “kissing the snake” - keeping ourselves in proximity to temptation or sin. How does the culture encourage us to cozy up with what we know is wrong? What are some specific examples of this that you see in today’s world?

2. Ask someone to read aloud Ephesians 4:22-27. What does it mean to “put off your old self”? What does it mean to “give the devil a foothold in your life?”

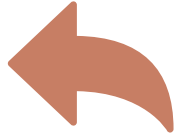
3. Now ask someone to read 1 Kings 21:20-26. Ahab and Jezebel had “bought into the business of evil” (verse 20 MSG). When you reflect on everything we’ve covered in this study, what chances had God given them to change? Why do you think, after his initial repentance, Ahab went back to the business of doing evil?

4. We would like to think that the death of King Ahab brought Israel to a widespread return to the Lord. But alas, Ahaziah was a chip off the old demonic block. How did Elijah demonstrate unbreakable courage in his confrontation with this particular ungodly king? Where do you see opportunity right now to stand courageously for good in your community?

5. Paul wrote that the weapons we have at our disposal “have divine power to demolish strongholds” (2 Corinthians 10:4). Which of these weapons - such as prayer, worship, and the Word are you using today to battle against the enemy? Which of these weapons do you need to pick up or wield more effectively in the fight?



Session 5: Don't Kiss The Snake



Respond

Generations of Christians have recognized the book of James as one of the most practical and helpful epistles of the New Testament. The apostle tackles many subjects in letter, but he does so with a compactness and an efficiency that really pack a punch. James wrote to the church during a season of intense persecution from several sides. The Jewish leaders in many cities were actively persecuting members of the early church, both by excommunicating them from the larger Jewish community and by actively attacking Christians - including putting them to death. Likewise, the authority of the Roman Empire had begun to swing against Christians, singling them out for all manner of punishment and cruelty.

That being the case, it's helpful to see what James had to say about this topic of standing courageously in the face of evil:

6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favour to the humble." 7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil , and he will flee from you. 8 Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.9 Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. James 4:6-10

Take a few moments to reread this passage and make a list of all the commands that are given. What promises are included with those commands?

In your experience, what does it look like on a pratical lvl to "resist the devil"? How are followers of Jesus to actively resist the devil as part of their daily lives?



Pray

When the time comes to close this session, acknowledging your tendency (and the tendencies of every person) to remain close to sin and sinful habits even though you know they are harmful. Affirm the reality of evil in this world and ask for the Holy Spirit to fill each of you with strength and unbreakable courage so you can stand firm on truth, goodness, and justice. Use the space below to write down any requests that are raised so that you and your group members can pray about them in the upcoming week.