

The Gifts of God's Power

SESSION IN A SENTENCE: God empowers His people to confirm their calling and to carry out His mission.

BACKGROUND PASSAGE: 1 Kings 19–2 Kings 2

Succession is important in various spheres of life. We see good succession plans emphasized in business, sports, and government, just to name a few. As Christians, we enjoy the benefits of faithful brothers and sisters in previous generations who have handed down the faith to the next generation. How did the gospel get from Jerusalem to you? It was this: Christians didn't let the gospel die with them. They shared it with others and passed it down to the next generation. So here we are today bearing that same responsibility.



How have you been disciplined by others in your life?

Group Time

Point 1: The successor commits fully to the mission (1 Kings 19:19-22).

¹⁹ So he departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen in front of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed by him and cast his cloak upon him. ²⁰ And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, “Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you.” And he said to him, “Go back again, for what have I done to you?” ²¹ And he returned from following him and took the yoke of oxen and sacrificed them and boiled their flesh with the yokes of the oxen and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and went after Elijah and assisted him.

Elisha showed his commitment to follow Elijah by destroying all of his old means of sustenance. He then threw a party to tell everyone he was following God’s will. Elisha was excited to abandon everything he knew for the call of the Lord.

How would you gauge your willingness to sacrifice in order to follow God’s call?



Prideful Refusal

Joyful Surrender

ELIJAH (1 Kings 19:19-22)	JESUS (Luke 9:61-62)
Allowed Elisha to Say Goodbye? _____	Allowed Man to Say Goodbye? _____
A _____ of God	The _____ of God
Called Elisha as a _____	Calls Disciples to Make _____

Mission of the Church: Go into the world in the power of the Spirit and make disciples by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus, calling people to respond in ongoing _____ and _____.



What must we give up in order to follow Jesus wholeheartedly?

Point 2: The successor requests God's power to complete the mission (2 Kings 2:6-12a).

⁶ Then Elijah said to him, "Please stay here, for the LORD has sent me to the Jordan." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on. ⁷ Fifty men of the sons of the prophets also went and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. ⁸ Then Elijah took his cloak and rolled it up and struck the water, and the water was parted to the one side and to the other, till the two of them could go over on dry ground.

⁹ When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken from you." And Elisha said, "Please let there be a double portion of your spirit on me." ¹⁰ And he said, "You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it shall be so for you, but if you do not see me, it shall not be so." ¹¹ And as they still went on and talked, behold, chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. ^{12a} And Elisha saw it and he cried, "My father, my father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!"

When the time came for Elijah's departure, he initially tried to shake Elisha (vv. 1-6). This likely was a test to see if Elisha would count the cost of discipleship, and he passed. Regarding our own call to forsake all for the glory of God, will we persist and persevere?

What are some important characteristics of a disciple of Jesus?

Temple of the Holy Spirit: As the temple of the Holy Spirit, we live our lives _____ than before, bearing the virtuous _____ that comes only by the indwelling work of the Spirit, which also _____ individual members of the church with gifts for the work of the ministry.

Elisha asked for a "*double portion*" of Elijah's spirit. He recognized that he would need great help as God's representative to fulfill his calling. The God who sent *the chariot and horses of fire* for Elijah is that help, and He would be with Elisha in power.



How is the power of God evident in the life of the believer in Christ?

Point 3: The successor is confirmed by a sign to begin the mission (2 Kings 2:12b-15).

^{12b} And he saw him no more. ¹³ And he took up the cloak of Elijah that had fallen from him and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. ¹⁴ Then he took the cloak of Elijah that had fallen from him and struck the water, saying, “Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?” And when he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and Elisha went over.

¹⁵ Now when the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho saw him opposite them, they said, “The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha.” And they came to meet him and bowed to the ground before him.

God would not cease to have a prophet calling Israel to faithfulness. Elijah might have been gone, but God wasn't. The God of Elijah was still present, which was what Elisha communicated when he struck the river once again with Elijah's cloak. Elisha believed that God had not abandoned the people, and he relied upon God for the power to minister to them. Elisha, like Elijah, operated with a great vision of God. These two prophets had great faith because they had a great God—as do we.



Voices from Church History

“[Elijah] left his mantle as a legacy to Elisha, and, though in itself it was of small value, yet as it was a token of the descent of the Spirit upon him, it was more than if he had bequeathed to him thousands of gold and silver.”¹

—Matthew Henry (1662-1714)



What should faith in the God of Elijah lead believers to do and say today?

Elisha was a true successor to Elijah, so His ministry in Israel and the surrounding nations would bring the blessings of God's grace and the curses of His judgment. But his ministry was greater still, for it pointed forward to a greater Prophet. This Prophet, the true firstborn Son of God, also was anointed at the Jordan River. His command over water came not through a mantle but by the sound of His voice. And He came not just to confront idolatry but to provide salvation from idolatry. He is greater than Elijah; He is greater than Elisha; He is the God-man, Jesus the Messiah.



Why should the unfolding of the whole story of Scripture inspire us to worship and trust our God?

Daily Study

Day 1: Read 1 Kings 19:19-21

Never forget the cost of discipleship and the importance of having godly relationships in your life. Both of these essentials are expressed in this passage.

We see Elisha's total abandonment of all things to follow this prophetic calling. The call to follow Jesus will also involve sacrificing certain things. It's a privilege to follow Jesus, yet it's also costly. But every true saint who has followed Jesus for years can testify that the reward reveals the sacrifice is actually quite small because Jesus is better than everything.

Then we also read in verse 21 how Elisha arose, followed Elijah, and assisted him—a picture of intimacy and companionship. In 2 Kings 2:12, Elisha called Elijah “father,” indicating the intimacy the two shared. Remember, Elijah had previously been isolated and discouraged. But now he received the blessing of being with Elisha and preparing him for the work ahead.



Who are the people in your life who bring you spiritual refreshment? Thank God for them.



Voices from Church History

“Knowing that he had been called by God, [Elisha] gave thanks to God for the call. He did not look back to those whom he had left, which would certainly have been understandable, but he had been called by the will of God.”³

—Johannes Bugenhagen
(1485-1558)

Day 2: Read 2 Kings 1:1-18

Ahaziah continued in the evil ways of his wicked father, Ahab (see 1 Kings 22:51-53). He had seen the gracious and harsh acts of God toward Ahab, and yet, he followed in the evil path of his father anyway. The apple didn't fall far from the tree, as this passage highlights.

When parents detest God or minimize Him, they shouldn't be surprised when their children do the same. When we passively and implicitly teach our children that God isn't important, our children will live that story out. Parents who inadvertently teach their children that the world revolves around them by regularly skipping corporate worship for other things shouldn't be surprised when, later in life, their kids don't see the local church as a big deal. Children will be influenced by what they have been taught, whether it was explicit or implicit.



What are some simple but important ways parents can disciple their children?

Day 3: Read 2 Kings 2:1-12a

Elisha would not let Elijah shake him. Most scholars believe the point of his not leaving Elijah's side was to test whether Elisha would count the cost of discipleship, probably a final test to see if he would persist. We see something of our own call here—to forsake all for the glory of the Name. The question for us, like Elisha, is will we persist and persevere? This is the sign of the true disciple: delighting in God above all else and persevering in the faith and the mission. Elisha was a true disciple, for he had forsaken all, burning the plows, to follow Elijah. And this wouldn't be the last time disciples would forsake all to follow a great prophet!

Elijah went on to his eternal reward without tasting death because God is in control of death and can overrule it. Elisha saw his mentor taken away, just as he hoped, but he also was sad and showed signs of sorrow over his loss (v. 12). Yet he would get up and persist in the mission to which he was called.

This text leaves us with some questions: Will we count the cost? Will we persist? Will we seek the glory of God over our own? Will we rely on God's power to speak God's Word faithfully in places of darkness?



What tests of your perseverance in the faith are you currently facing?

Day 4: Read 2 Kings 2:12b-25

The passing of the mantle to Elisha was validated in three signs. One, Elisha, the new Joshua, parted the Jordan River and headed toward Jericho, reversing Elijah's steps. The company of prophets realized that Elijah had passed his prophetic work on to Elisha, so they revered him as the new representative of God for Israel.

Two, the men of Jericho said something lethal was in the water causing humans and animals to miscarry and die. Historically, Joshua had cursed anyone who would try to rebuild Jericho (Josh. 6:26), and during Ahab's reign, someone did pay the price of that curse (1 Kings 16:34). Through Elisha's miracle, the city that was under a curse now received a blessing from Yahweh—fresh, healthy water.

Three, as Elisha traveled to Bethel, some boys came out of the city to ridicule this new Joshua who had come to pagan Bethel to root out Canaanite worship. In saying, "Go up, you baldhead!" they essentially meant "Get out of here; we don't want anything to do with you." In their mockery these guys are showing contempt and hostility toward Yahweh and His representative. So Elisha brought on God's judgment against these mockers, and she-bears attack the boys (see Lev. 26:21-22). God will not be mocked; He will have the last word (Gal. 6:7).



What are some ways you can stand for the honor of God when He is mocked in this world?

Day 5: Read 2 Kings 4:1-44

Here we find one of the most fascinating and exciting portions of 2 Kings. We finished the story of Elijah in 2 Kings 2. Elijah was gone, but his ministry wasn't. It continued, particularly through the life of his successor, Elisha.

But Elisha reminds us of more than just his mentor. As the privileged readers of the Old *and* New Testaments, we also see that Elisha foreshadowed the ministry of Jesus. Elisha's ministry was a Messiah-like ministry. In fact, Elisha's ministry was closer to the ministry of Jesus than Elijah's in some ways, especially in the degree of compassion that he demonstrated. Like Jesus, Elisha had compassion on those in need: a widow, a barren woman, a dead son, a hungry multitude, a leper, and those in difficulty (4:1–6:7).



How do the people of God need to balance tender pastoral care with strong prophetic traits today?

THE GOSPEL PROJECT®

The Gospel Project®
Adult Daily Discipleship Guide ESV
Volume 8, Number 1 Fall 2019

Ed Stetzer
Founding Editor

Trevin Wax
General Editor

Brian Dembowczyk
Managing Editor

Daniel Davis
Content Editor

Josh Hayes
Content and Production Editor

Ken Braddy
Manager, Adult Ongoing Bible Studies

Michael Kelley
Director, Groups Ministry

Send questions/comments to:
Content Editor by email to
daniel.davis@lifeway.com or mail to
Content Editor, *The Gospel Project: Adult
Daily Discipleship Guide*, One LifeWay Plaza,
Nashville, TN 37234-0175; or make comments
on the Web at lifeway.com.

Printed in the United States of America

The Gospel Project®: *Adult Daily Discipleship
Guide* ESV (ISSN 2330-9393; Item 005573553)
is published quarterly by LifeWay Christian
Resources, One LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN
37234, Thom S. Rainer, President. © 2019
LifeWay Christian Resources.

For ordering or inquiries, visit lifeway.com, or
write LifeWay Resources Customer Service, One
LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234-0113. For bulk
shipments mailed quarterly to one address, email
orderentry@lifeway.com, fax 615.251.5933, or write
to the above address.

We believe that the Bible has God for its author;
salvation for its end; and truth, without any
mixture of error, for its matter and that all
Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. To
review LifeWay's doctrinal guideline, please visit
www.lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline.

All Scripture quotations are taken from the English
Standard Version® (The Holy Bible, English
Standard Version®), copyright 2001 by Crossway,
a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.
Used by permission. All rights reserved.

A Word from the Editor



Trevin Wax

General Editor—*The Gospel Project*
AUTHOR OF MULTIPLE BOOKS, INCLUDING
*This Is Our Time: Everyday Myths in
Light of the Gospel*

The prophetic books of the Old Testament can be confusing, both to the newcomer to the Bible and the longtime reader.

Where do these prophets fit in the overall narrative of Israel and Judah? What messages did they communicate? What was God doing in and through their work? The benefit of this volume of *The Gospel Project* is that it gives you a glimpse of the prophets right at the point their message was going forth to God's people. We can ask questions of God with Habakkuk, look forward to the coming Suffering Servant with Isaiah, stand amazed at the stunning picture of relentless love in Hosea, and learn something of God's extravagant love with Jonah.

As you work through the sessions in this volume, keep an eye on all the different ways God reveals Himself and communicates His messages of judgment and grace. Fall to your knees in awe, and then stand up and boldly proclaim the love of this great God, who inspired the prophets to deliver His word.

EDITOR

UNIT 13

SESSION 1

1. Billy Graham, *Till Armageddon* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1984), 24.
2. John Bunyan, in *The Complete Works of John Bunyan* (Philadelphia, PA: Bradley, Garretson & Co., 1873), 80.
3. Trillia J. Newbell, *Fear and Faith* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2015), 146.

SESSION 2

1. Isho'dad of Merv, Books of Sessions 1 Kings 19.2, quoted in *1–2 Kings, 1–2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, ed. Marco Conti, vol. V in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].
2. Elyse Fitzpatrick, "The Gospel Cure," Ligonier Ministries, March 1, 2008, <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/gospel-cure>.

SESSION 3

1. Matthew Henry, in *The New Matthew Henry Commentary: Complete and Unabridged* (Zondervan, 2012) [Wordsearch].
2. Charles Spurgeon, in *Charles Spurgeon's Classics* (Charles River Editors, 2016) [eBook].
3. Johannes Bugenhagen, *Commentary on 1 Kings*, quoted in *1–2 Samuel, 1–2 Kings, 1–2 Chronicles*, eds. Derek Cooper and Martin J. Lohrmann, vol. 5 in *Reformation Commentary on Scripture: Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015) [Wordsearch].

SESSION 4

1. Francis Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There*, in *The Francis A. Schaeffer Trilogy* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1990), 167.
2. Jackie Hill Perry, *Gay Girl, Good God* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2018), 146.

UNIT 14

SESSION 1

1. Priscilla Shirer, *Jonah: Navigating a Life Interrupted* (Nashville, TN: LifeWay Press, 2010), 132.
2. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 16.14, quoted in *The Twelve Prophets*, ed. Alberto Ferreira, vol. XIV in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Old Testament* (IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].
3. Henry T. Scholl, "The Words of the Master," *Christian Work* (January 25, 1900): 142.
4. Spence Shelton, in *The Gospel According to Jonah*, by J.D. Greear (Nashville, TN: LifeWay Press, 2013), 18–19.

SESSION 2

1. Robert Robinson, "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing," in *Baptist Hymnal* (Nashville, TN: LifeWay Worship, 2008), 98.
2. Nancy Guthrie, "How Could God Ask That?" The Gospel Coalition, July 28, 2011, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/how-could-god-ask-that>.

SESSION 3

1. R. Stanton Norman, "Human Sinfulness," in *A Theology for the Church, Revised Edition*, ed. Daniel L. Akin (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2014), 378.
2. Jen Wilkin, *None Like Him* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 158.

UNIT 15

SESSION 1

1. Brother Lawrence, *The Practice of the Presence of God* (Health Research Books, 1996), 50.
2. Paulson Pulikottil, "Isaiah," in *South Asia Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Brian Wintle (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 906.

SESSION 2

1. Siang Yong Tan and Yvonne Tatsumura, "Alexander Fleming (1881–1955): Discoverer of penicillin," *Singapore Medical Journal* (July 2015): 366–67, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4520913>.
2. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, trans. W. F. Trotter, ed. Anthony Uyl (Woodstock, Ontario, Canada: Devoted Publishing, 2018), 93.
3. Thomas Watson, *The Doctrine of Repentance* (Charles River Editors, 2018) [eBook].
4. Pew Research Center, "U.S. Public Becoming Less Religious," November 3, 2015, <http://www.pewforum.org/2015/11/03/u-s-public-becoming-less-religious>.

SESSION 3

1. Bede, *On the Tabernacle*, 17.47, quoted in *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, ed. Dean O. Wenhe, vol. XII in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Old Testament* (IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].
2. Matt Chandler with Jared Wilson, *The Explicit Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 199.
3. J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels*, vol. 1 (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1874), 55.

SESSION 4

1. Kurt Badenhausen, "The 2018 Boston Marathon: By The Numbers," *Forbes*, April 16, 2018, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kurtbadenhausen/2018/04/16/the-boston-marathon-2018-by-the-numbers/#2c43b0cd31d6>.
2. John Rippon's *Selection of Hymns*, "How Firm a Foundation," in *Baptist Hymnal* (Nashville, TN: LifeWay Worship, 2008), 456.
3. Raechel Myers, "Justice: let's begin at the cross," *She Reads Truth*, January 16, 2019, <https://shereadstruth.com/2014/07/22/justice-lets-begin-cross>.
4. "Habakkuk," in *Africa Study Bible* (Oasis International, 2016), 1329.

SESSION 5

1. Nancy Leigh DeMoss, "Nothing Between," excerpted from *Revival Commentary*, vol. 2, no. 2, January 29, 2019, <https://www.reviveourhearts.com/media/uploads/pdf/articles/NothingBetween.pdf>.
2. Timothy Keller, *Judges for You* (Purcellville, VA: The Good Book Company, 2013) [Wordsearch].
3. Robert Wood, "100m World Records," Topend Sports, January 25, 2019, <https://www.topendsports.com/sport/athletics/record-100m.htm>.
4. Matthew Henry, *An Exposition of the Old and New Testament*, vol. 1 (London: Joseph Ogle Robinson, 1828), 1112.
5. Adapted from "Why Grief Is Evidence for God," by Sharon Dirckx, The Gospel Coalition, May 10, 2016, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/why-grief-is-evidence-for-god>.

SESSION 6

1. American Heart Association, "About CPR & ECC," January 30, 2019, https://cpr.heart.org/AHA/ECC/CPRECC/AboutCPRECC/UCM_473210_About-CPR-ECC.jsp.
2. Francis Chan and Preston Sprinkle, *Erasing Hell* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 2011) [eBook].
3. Robert Lowry, "Nothing but the Blood," in *Baptist Hymnal* (Nashville, TN: LifeWay Worship, 2008), 223.
4. John R. W. Stott, *Basic Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1971), 11.
5. Lamar Eugene Cooper Sr., *Ezekiel*, vol. 17 in *The New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 1994), 312.