

## Dealing with Despair Small Group Guide

**Warm-up Question:** (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. What was one of your favorite toys as a child?
2. What is one interesting thing you have read, listened to, or watched this year?

**Read the following passage:** 1 Kings 19:1-5.

At first glance, Elijah's response to Jezebel's threats seems surprising. Elijah just experienced one of the most spectacular demonstrations of God's power recorded in the Scriptures. So why would Elijah not believe that God would protect him now? Disappointment and despair are often connected to our expectations. In Elijah's case, he was hopeful that God's demonstration of his superiority over the pagan gods would lead to a great spiritual renewal in Israel. But that didn't happen. This unmet expectation spiraled into despair.

**Questions for Discussion** (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Have you ever felt disappointed by God? Explain.
2. Are you prone to lowering your expectations of God or other people so that you won't be disappointed? Explain. How might we be prone to hide this lowering of expectations behind a pretense of humility or gratitude for what we have already received?
3. Why is hope important? What should hope look like in a broken world in which we all experience some degree of pain and disappointment?
4. Read 1 Kings 19:11-18. How does God help Elijah? What can we learn from this example?
5. What can we do to grow in hope?

**Pray**