



# Elijah

Week 1 : August 18-24

1 Kings 17:1-24

*We hope that this guide will prove valuable to you as you participate with us in 28 days of prayer. It is important that you read all of the scripture passages that are included. They set the foundation for the devotionals. The blanks have been left in this digital copy for those who may want to print the guide out. If not, you will want to have writing materials available to complete the questions and applications. May God richly bless you on this journey.*

## Monday, August 19

**Before you begin,** read I John 1:5-9 with James 5:16-20.

**Focal passage:** “Therefore confess your sins to one another and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.” James 5:16

**For thought:** Do you typically focus more on confession in your prayer or more on requests? What makes this a priority for you?

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When we are in a right relationship with God, our fervent and earnest prayer “produces wonderful results” (v.16, NLT). Another version says that the prayer of the righteous “has great power as it is working” (ESV). Prayer is powerful because it turns our false dependence on ourselves into a true dependence on God. Farmer-turned-preacher Agnus Buchan once said, “When man works, man works. When man prays, God works.” Pray now that God would work through your life, with power as you surrender to Him.

**Apply:** Read v. 16 again. Who is one trusted, Godly person in your life that you can open up to about a struggle you may be facing? What would God have you share with them so they may pray with you and encourage healing in your life ?

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What is one situation in your life that that you have been depending on self, instead of depending on God? Write it down and pray about it!

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Elijah was not perfect even as we are not. Elijah did know and believe the One who is perfect in all His ways. God told Him to act, and he trusted God to the point that he put his own reputation as a prophet and leader, on the line. If God did not come through for him, he was done. Have you ever gone so far out on a limb in believing God, that if He did not come through, you would be humiliated, finished? Has God been pulling you toward, as Oswald Chambers says, “total abandon to Christ?” What would it look like in your life? What would have to change for you to hold nothing back?

**Praying God’s Word:** Oh, Father, I would have despaired had I not believed I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living ( Ps. 27 ) and you have been so good to me. Help me now to deny myself, take up my cross, whatever sacrifice you require, and follow You in a whole new mind set. (Luke 9) Help me to not offer to You, the Lord my God, of that which cost me nothing. (2 Sam. 24) Let my life be poured out as a drink offering to you oh, God.(2 Tim. 4) Come to me as the rain, like the spring rain watering the earth (Hosea 6) and revive me Oh, Lord as I give my all to you. Write your response to the Lord.

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## Tuesday, August 20

**Before you begin,** read I Kings 17: 1-7 with Isaiah 30:18-21.

**Focal passage:** Is. 30:21 “ And your ears will hear a word behind you, ‘This is the way, walk in it,’ whenever you turn to the right or to the left...”

**For thought:** On the day-to-day who or what determines your schedule? Who determines your priorities? Is there a difference between the two?

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Christian artist Steven Curtis Chapman sang, “God is God and I am not, I can only see a part...” which is a wise perspective for life. God has the wisdom and right to orchestrate our lives as He wills, even if it takes us to places we would not otherwise go. Elijah had valiantly followed God to challenge King Ahab, now he is directed to hide at Cherith. This was quite a change of venue.

**Apply:** Read Isaiah 30:18 again. Think of a time when your plans got changed without warning. How did you respond?

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How might it change your attitude toward unexpected interruptions, if you understood that, in the Christian life, God’s interruptions are invitations to follow Him? What do you want to say to God?

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Hearing and knowing the will of God is a hot topic in Christian circles, and there is much debate about it. How do we learn to listen and become accustomed to His voice? The same way we do anything else spiritually, we read His Word, and we pray.

Elijah had to learn that sometimes God says, “stop,” sometimes, “ go” and sometimes He says, “wait for it.” We need to be able to discern which He may be saying in our circumstance. We never want to put God in a box and say, he could never... However, since God does not change in His Character and being, we can gain helpful insight in the study of how God worked in the past. In the scriptures, God blessed obedience and disciplined rebellion of His children. So, the first thing to consider is, “am I in willful sin?” Sin causes considerable “static” in the lines of communication with God. Admit your sin and repent, turn from it. Secondly, difficulty is not a sign that God is not working. In fact, it could be the opposite. When you pray and your circumstances get more difficult, you are in good company. Moses, Elijah, David, and Paul all experienced hard times. Stay in His Word. While He can speak in other ways, the most trustworthy way to hear Him is in His Word. His Spirit will instruct, clarify, train and even bring to our memory what we may have forgotten about the Lord and his ways. At times He may send lightning and thunder, but often He will send a gentle breeze, a still small voice. But be sure, He wants you to hear Him.

**Praying God’s Word:** Father in Heaven, God of Glory I bow before you as the only one worthy of praise. In You and You alone I live and move and exist (Acts 17:28) and I know that You alone have the words of life (John 6:68). You have invited us to come boldly before the throne of grace so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Heb. 4:16) and so I come today with confidence in You. Forsaking all, I trust in You. Let the Words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, Oh Lord, my strength and my Redeemer. (Psalm 19:14.) Speak to me, Father, for your servant is listening. (1 Samuel 3:10) Write your prayer. \_\_\_\_\_

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## Thursday, August 22

**Before you begin,** read I Kings 17:8-16 with Romans 8:26-28

**Focal passage:** Romans 8:28 " And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

**For thought:** What do you think is God's purpose in doing a miracle? Could there be more than one reason?

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God was working to provide for Elijah, but we also see that He was working to provide for the widow. It is helpful for us to remember that God is always working and is working for the benefit of any number of his children, at any given time. Food was certainly an urgent need for them all, but that was not their only need. Jesus often healed people, fed people, delivered people from demons and yet He did these various "signs and wonders" with deeper purposes, to show God's power and to bring Glory to Him. So, we also should acknowledge that our circumstances may be much more about God's glory than our need.

**Apply:** Read Romans 8:28 again. Have circumstances ever made you wonder what God was up to?

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Describe a time you doubted whether anything good could come from tragedy or heartache. Ask God right now to help you believe Him more in these difficult times.

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Satan has a game plan, and it is often centered around getting us to doubt the goodness of God. The widow expected that she and her son would die. She really did not believe God would come through for her. While God is not obligated to meet our every desire, He is good and kind and merciful to an extent we

sometimes may not acknowledge. Knowing God can do something, and believing He will, are two different things. It may seem hard to pray for a miracle in your life because of this tension, after all God does not always say, "yes." The apostle Paul asked three times for God to take away a problem he was experiencing. God's answer to Him was that it was helpful to Paul to experience God's power by living with it day after day. For Paul, it was enough that God was manifesting His power in his life. If we desire God's power in our lives to that extent, the frequency and content our prayers will likely change. We do not know what God WILL do, but we know from God's Word what He CAN do, so we should ask. If our goal is to bring glory to Him, whatever the means is up to Him. He is absolutely good. He is absolutely right, and we can absolutely trust Him. As you pray today ask that God would be glorified through the circumstances of your life, and ask for that miracle, that difficulty, that need. Always trust that even if He delays, He is not unconcerned.

**Praying God's Word:** Oh, Father you reign, and You are clothed with majesty (Ps. 93:1). Your way is blameless, and You are a shield to all who take refuge in You (2 Sam.22:31), so we take refuge under Your wing (Ps. 91:4). You welcome us to come boldly before the throne of grace and that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Heb. 4:16). I come to You now with full assurance of faith, that You who began this good work of salvation in me, will keep perfecting it until Christ comes! (Phil. 1:16). Work in me, Oh God, when I do not see the answer to my prayers. I know that all things are possible, Lord. I do believe, but help my unbelief in certain areas (Mark 9:23-24.) I want to be an oak of righteousness, a planting of the Lord, that You may be glorified (Is. 61:7.) Write your response to God.

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## Friday, August 23

**Before you begin,** read 1 Kings 17:17-24 with Daniel 3:13-18

**Focal passage:** Daniel 3: 17-18 "...our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if He does not...we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

**For thought:** What do you think of when you think of eternal life?

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What ultimately happened to everyone that Jesus healed or raised from the dead?

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When Jesus said in John 10:10, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly," he was not speaking particularly of our physical life. While God wants us to have a rich and meaningful life, that was not why Jesus came. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost and testify of this truth, that mankind has no other means of redemption. After all, lost people can have a sense of purpose and prosper. They raise families, own businesses, contribute to society in many of the same ways as Christians. But they do not have this abundant life of which Jesus spoke. Eternal life is a life dedicated to God here and now, which will continue when we die, and transition to heaven. This life is brief in comparison to the eternity for which we wait.

**Apply:** Have you ever prayed and felt disappointed at the answer or the apparent lack of one? How did you view God in light of that experience? Talk to the Lord about this now. Don't be afraid to be honest.

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How we respond to adversity tell us a lot about what we believe about God. It is interesting that the woman who had just seen God deliver her and her son from starvation, immediately turned on Elijah--and on God--at the death of her son. It was one step too far

for her faith. It was not easy for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to commit to go to the fiery furnace. They were real men who likely had no desire to die a torturous death. The thing that distinguished them from their "knee-bowing" neighbors was that they did not wait until the crisis came to decide what their posture would be, literally! They didn't even have to think about it. They would not bow to the statue; they would not bow to the King. They would not bow though the culture around them did. They knew God was able, and although they did not know what He would require, their answer was "yes." Abraham stood over his son, whom he had bound and placed on the altar, knife raised. He did not know what God would require of him, but his answer was already yes. The Bible says he believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness. Our crises do not determine our faith, they reveal it. Can you say, "My God is able to deliver me from my circumstance, but even if He does not, I will not bow to Satan's idol of bitterness, or anger or resentment? I will not turn on Him?" Lay it out before God in prayer. Ask Him to increase your faith, to help you trust Him in the hard places.

**Praying God's Word:** Oh, Father, creator and sustainer of the universe, in you we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Col. 1:14) I do not always know how to pray as I should, but You know me, O Lord, You see me, and You examine my heart's attitude toward You. (Jer. 12:3) This is eternal life to know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent, (John 17:3) and I want to know you more. Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; let Your good Spirit lead me on level ground. (Ps. 143:10) But when the road gets rough and long, and my strength is almost gone, I will look to You.

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## Saturday, August 24

**Before you begin,** read 1 Kings 17:18-24 with John 11:38-44

**Focal passage:** John 11:41 “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that You always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.”

**For thought:** The tone of Elijah’s prayers to raise the dead son are quite a contrast to Jesus’ prayer before he raised Lazarus. To what do you attribute this difference?

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There was a certainty to Jesus’ prayer while Elijah plead multiple times and questioned God’s handling of the situation. God can handle our questions, but Jesus had a distinct advantage. He knew His Father’s will, both for Lazarus and for the local mourners who had gathered. It was life! Literal life for Lazarus, but eternal life for those who would believe that He was who He said He was, and that He could do what He said He could do. He proved He was God and had the power over life and death.

**Apply:** Have you ever plead repeatedly for the Lord to work in a situation? Is it resolved? What would you say to God regarding your request?

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One of the mysteries of the Christian faith is the tension between God’s sovereignty, His absolute rule, and our ability to call on the Lord and ask. Some modern “word of faith” movements have attempted to hijack prayer as a tool for their own personal benefit. We should be careful regarding those who say they can pray about anything they choose and know with certainty that God will give them what they want. There were times in scripture when God revealed what He was going to do. There is certainty in that. He told Elijah it was time for the rain to

return. What did Elijah do? He prayed and had someone check the sky until it was realized. Thankfully, we do not control God by our prayers, but if we are praying with the intent that God be glorified by whatever the outcome, then our prayers are in God’s will and deepen our faith. Henry Blackaby was known to say, “see where God is working and get in on it!” Perhaps that is what prayer best allows us to do, to join Him in His work. In the case of the dead son, the mother had only her own interest and not much faith when Elijah began to pray. God, being rich in mercy, healed the boy and this act brought the mother to true belief. Martha and Mary already believed Jesus could have saved their brother, and we can conclude that their brother was a believer, since Martha was confident that he would be resurrected. If Jesus had done nothing, they would all have been fine. There were those watching, however, who needed to believe, and Jesus gave them the opportunity--right there at the graveside! Jesus had all power and authority, and ownership of the universe, but His desire was for them. He invited them to eavesdrop on His conversation with His Father by praying aloud. Unlike the mother, when confronted by the power of God, they would not believe.

**Praying God’s Word:** Dear Lord, author and perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12:2), I thank you that you invite us to come and “believe the unbelievable, to conceive of the inconceivable.”<sup>1</sup> You have given me everything I need for life and Godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). Forgive me when I have refused to believe even in the face of overwhelming evidence of your power. Thank you for your mercies that are new every morning, great is Your faithfulness, oh Lord to me! (Lam. 3:23). What a kind and gracious Father You are. Now to You, being able to do far more abundantly than all I can ask or think, to You Oh Lord, be glory both now and forever! (Eph. 3:20) Voice your prayer here.

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1. Steven Curtis Chapman, “Great Expectations,” *Speechless*, 1999.