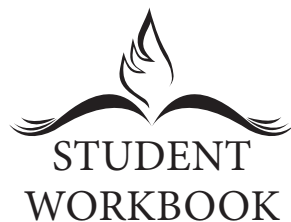


SUMMER 2020

The Living Word

S E R I E S

God Is Faithful



STUDENT
WORKBOOK

Student Workbook

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God Will Supply

▶▶ FOCUS THOUGHT

God takes care of His people.

▶▶ FOCUS VERSE

I Kings 17:16

And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah.

▶▶ LESSON TEXT

I Kings 17:1-4; 8-16

1 And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

2 And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying,

3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

4 And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

.....

8 And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying,

9 Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.

10 So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.

11 And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand.

12 And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.

13 And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.

14 For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.

15 And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days.

16 And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah.

CULTURE CONNECTION

God Provides in Every Situation

Marcus and Renee Brainos were on their first deputation as UPCI missionaries to France. They had planned to spend part of the winter in Canada and had outfitted their three children with warm outerwear. But Marcus only had an older coat, and Renee did not really have anything warm enough for the trip. The kids were taken care of, so Renee had decided to manage until she could find something without straining their budget.

One Sunday, after ministering at a church in Arkansas, the pastor's wife gave Renee a package from a lady in their church. That morning, as this lady was leaving for church, the Lord spoke to her about a very warm Italian leather coat she had in her closet. "That coat belongs to the wife of the missionary couple at church today. Take it to her."

When Renee was given the coat, she was shocked and then became a little nervous that it would not fit. But she immediately thought, *If God sent this to me, then why would it not fit?* Not only did it fit, but there were also very warm gloves in the pocket. The lady had started to remove them but felt instructed to leave them as well.

God knows our every need and is faithful to provide. Sometimes He asks us to go into situations that require things we do not have, but He knows those needs before we do and already has a plan.

LESSON OUTLINE

I. ELIJAH PROPHESED

- A. No Dew or Rain
- B. Sometimes God Gives an Unpopular Word (Day 1)

II. ELIJAH AT THE BROOK CHERITH

- A. Ravens Fed Him (Day 2)
- B. The Lord Takes Care of Those Who Trust Him

III. WIDOW OF ZAREPHATH

- A. Gave Her Last Meal to the Prophet (Day 3)
- B. Meal and Oil Never Ran Out
- C. The Lord Takes Care of Those Who Put Him First (Day 4)

IV. GOD WILL SUPPLY

- A. We Must Trust in the Lord
- B. We Must Put God First (Day 5)

APPROACH

Day 1

Jonah received an unpopular word from God. God commanded Jonah to go to Nineveh and tell the people to repent or face His wrath. This word did not sit well with Jonah as there was a contentious history between Israel and Nineveh. Instead of going to Nineveh as directed, Jonah went to Joppa and boarded a ship sailing for Tarshish. A storm arose, which caused the ship and crew to be in peril. When Jonah confessed his responsibility, the crew tossed Jonah overboard into the sea. Jonah was swallowed by a great fish, where he spent the next three days and nights. Once Jonah was delivered from the fish, he went straight to Nineveh and completed the task God had originally given him.

Elijah was far more obedient than Jonah. However, this did not make his task any easier. There are times when we as individuals—or as the collective body of Christ—receive an unpopular word from God. Sometimes the Word of God that comes from the pulpit of our local assembly is not popular. In Jonah 4 we see the prophet proclaiming his discontent with the task God had given him. Eventually he submitted to the authority of God and obeyed, just as Elijah had obeyed God..

ASK AND APPLY

- » *How do you handle an unpopular word from God—with compliance or disregard?*
- » *Why should God's Word be obeyed at all times?*

Day 2

The irony is thick when looking at the choice God made in the way he would feed Elijah. The raven has long been associated with darkness or evil doings. Many stories and poems have been written using the raven as a symbol of evil or darkness. Most famous in modern times is the poem “The Raven” by Edgar Allan Poe. It portrays a raven talking to a man distraught at the loss of his love and grappling for sanity. Even more ironic in the case of Elijah is that wild animals, or wild birds in this case, approached a human being to bring him food. Birds are always skittish around humans and other creatures that approach them, and rarely do they feel comfortable approaching humans.

The Bible does not give many details on what happened to Elijah during his stay at the Brook Cherith, only that he was fed by the ravens. Imagine if someone had come across the prophet during his stay at the brook. What would this person have witnessed? Elijah was healthy and vibrant during a time of drought and famine. Even more amazing were the ravens bringing him food. A person who saw ravens as evil creatures might be overcome with fear seeing them freely approaching and bringing food to the prophet. That vision alone could cause men to stay away for fear the prophet held some power over creatures associated with darkness. Yet God used ravens to feed His prophet. With this in mind, we can see some logic in why God would have used this method to care for the man He was protecting. In His own way, God provided both nourishment and protection for Elijah.



ASK AND APPLY

- » *How has God provided for you or others in a manner you could only describe as miraculous?*
- » *How could this testimony be a help to someone you know?*

Day 3

A closer look at the interaction between the widow and the prophet reveals how our human nature can give us pause when trusting God. The initial request by Elijah was simply for a vessel of water. The widow immediately set out to fulfill his request. As she was walking away, Elijah called out to her and asked that she bring him some bread. This request caused her to hesitate for a moment as she informed Elijah she only had enough meal to make bread for herself and her son. She further stated she had come to gather two sticks in order to prepare the bread “that we may eat it, and die” (1 Kings 17:12). In other words, she had enough meal to make one small morsel of bread; then she and her son would resign themselves to die from starvation. Elijah commanded her to make him some bread first, assuring her God would make sure her barrel would never be empty. In obedience to the word of God, she made the bread.

Hesitation in the face of imminent danger or uncertainty is an instinctive human reaction. Firefighters train to run toward dangerous situations in order to overcome the instinctive fear to flee. Their training is long and arduous, so when the moment arises, they can perform their duties. The widow demonstrated the natural hesitation of her humanity, yet when the word of God came forth, she immediately relied on her spirituality to overcome her fear. We must work daily in prayer and study to grow our faith in God.



ASK AND APPLY

- » *What are you doing to grow your faith in God?*
- » *Is your faith stronger than it used to be? Explain.*

Day 4

Every character in the Bible who put God first has always enjoyed God’s provisions. Even when the situation is less than desirable, God still provides for those who put Him first. Joseph was betrayed by his own brothers and sold into slavery. They had become jealous of Joseph being held up as the most blessed son of their father. Joseph ended up living many years as a slave, and his father thought he was dead. Joseph worked hard and was held in high regard by his master, Potiphar. One day Potiphar’s wife tried to seduce Joseph, but he fled. She lied to her husband saying Joseph had attacked her. Joseph was sent to prison an innocent man and remained incarcerated for years. But because he was able to interpret dreams, Pharaoh called Joseph to his court to tell Pharaoh what his dreams meant. When Joseph gave the interpretation to Pharaoh, he elevated Joseph to the second most powerful man in Egypt. When Joseph’s brothers came to Egypt looking for food, Joseph was in a position to help save his family and was eventually reunited with his father. Joseph was obedient to God throughout his ordeal. In Genesis 50:20 Joseph told his brothers, “But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.”

ASK AND APPLY

- » *Why is it difficult to put God first when it may feel like He has put you last?*
- » *How is your life different when you put God first?*

Day 5

The New Testament records Jesus saying, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). Today’s society rejects the idea of putting anything or anyone before oneself. Yet God teaches us to put Him first and He will supply all our needs. We must be cautious and understand that what we need and what we want can be two very different things. Sometimes we overlook the thing we need and focus on the thing we want. Often we want material things, positions of power or prestige, or a particular romantic partner; these make us lose focus. We must remember, if we put God first, He will supply all we need.

ASK AND APPLY

- » *What indicators demonstrate someone is putting God first?*
- » *Which of these indicators is present in your life right now?*



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▶▶ FOCUS THOUGHT

God honors His preachers' prayers.

▶▶ FOCUS VERSE

I Kings 17:24

And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth.

▶▶ LESSON TEXT

I Kings 17:17–23

17 And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him.

18 And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?

19 And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed.

20 And he cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?

21 And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again.

22 And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.

23 And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth.

CULTURE CONNECTION

Bayou Bartholomew

In July of 1989, Jerry Self and his brother-in-law were faced with the reality that in three hours, five-hundred acres of sweet potatoes would be under water. Twelve inches of rainfall had pushed the Bayou Bartholomew out of its banks, and it had reached the edge of Jerry's farmland. In desperation he called his pastors, A. J. and Dwight Fulton, to come pray for a miracle.

Both pastors arrived quickly. The men sat on a log that had floated to the edge of the field out of the bayou, and they began to pray.

After the pastors left, Jerry continued to monitor the water and found it had stopped rising. Believing the water had crested, Jerry checked the water levels north and south of him, only to learn the water was still rising.

Jerry continually checked the gauges and spoke with other farmers, again to receive the same report: the water was still rising. He went back to his fields, wondering what he would find, but the water continually stayed back.

For thirty days the water threatened, but it never rose higher than where the four men had sat and prayed.

Just as God heard Elijah's prayer, He hears the prayers of those He calls to watch over His people.

LESSON OUTLINE

I. CRISIS IN THE ERA OF THE KINGS

- A. The Rise of King Ahab
- B. The Rise of Idol Worship
- C. The Demands of Obedience Never Change (Day 1)

II. THE PORTRAYAL OF ELIJAH

- A. A Man of Purpose
- B. A Man of Prayer (Day 2)
- C. The Importance of Spiritual Authority (Day 3)

III. THE POWER OF A PRAYING PREACHER

- A. The Widow First Trusted Elijah (Day 4)
- B. The Widow Was Led to Trust in God
- C. The Importance of Spiritual Integrity (Day 5)

APPROACH

Day 1

There are two important lessons to draw from the story of Ahab's rise to power. First, God is not impressed or moved by worldly standards of success. Most historians agree that Omri and Ahab were two of the most powerful kings Israel had ever known. In fact, at the Battle of Qarqar, King Ahab was able to field an army of ten thousand infantry soldiers and two thousand chariots and was essentially the military leader of the coalition that confronted the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III (Victor P. Hamilton, *Handbook on the Historical Books*). However, despite the military and economic might of Omri and Ahab, they failed the one test of "good success" (Joshua 1:8)—they were not faithful to God or His covenant.

The second important lesson to draw from these stories is that God's demands for obedience never changed. Though centuries separate the time of Joshua from the time of Ahab, God still abhorred the gods of the Canaanites and all that their worship entailed. Not the "cultural shift," nor the "need for economic stability," nor the desire for "international recognition" were sufficient reasons for sacrificing Israel's strict loyalty to God. The actions of Omri and Ahab were sinful because they were rooted in a lack of trust in God to provide those things in His own way and time.

ASK AND APPLY

- » *Why are worldly definitions of success both so attractive and so dangerous?*
- » *How do the Bible's definitions differ from the world's definitions?*

Day 2

The only other thing we know about Elijah is he was a man of prayer. A grand total of fourteen separate prayer sessions are recorded in I Kings 17–19. Three things are noteworthy about Elijah's prayers. First, his prayers are striking in their simplicity. The Bible is no stranger to lengthy prayers. (See, for example, I Kings 8:22–53.) However, Elijah's prayer in chapter 17 was almost breathtakingly brief. "O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again" (I Kings 17:21). Later, in Matthew's record of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus extolled this kind of prayer: "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him" (Matthew 6:7–8).

Second, Elijah's prayers are notable for their honesty. Especially in his encounter with God on Mount Horeb in I Kings 19, Elijah was very open with his own feelings of isolation and perhaps even despair. Like David and the other psalmists, Elijah demonstrated honesty to be the hallmark of fervent prayer. In his honesty Elijah became for the apostle James a "model" man of prayer (James 5:17).

Finally, Elijah's prayers were notable in their persistence. He prayed three times for the widow's son to be resurrected (I Kings 17:21); he prayed seven times for the rains to fall and end the three-year-long drought (I Kings 18:43). In Luke 18:1 we find Jesus' Parable of the Unjust Judge was intended to teach this very lesson, "that men ought always to pray, and not to faint."

ASK AND APPLY

- » Besides honesty and persistence, what are two or three other keys to effective prayer you have discovered in your own life?
- » How have these keys impacted your prayer life?

Day 3

In the Old Testament, Elijah was an iconic example of spiritual authority. It is often forgotten that Baal's role in the Canaanite pantheon was as the god of storms (lightning and rain). When Elijah announced: "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word" (I Kings 17:1), he was directly challenging Baal's claims. According to the Canaanite Baal myth, drought signaled the "death" of the god; in effect, when Elijah stormed into Ahab's presence that day, Elijah, through Yahweh's power, "killed" Baal.

Elijah's spiritual authority may have been demonstrated in miraculous signs and wonders, but it was clearly rooted in Elijah's prayers. Charles H. Kraft was correct in saying, "Spiritual authority is in direct proportion to spiritual intimacy" (*The Evangelical's Guide to Spiritual Warfare*). As with all other forms of authority, spiritual authority comes with associated responsibilities. A pastor who has been granted spiritual oversight of a congregation has a spiritual obligation to uphold his congregants in intercessory prayer. At the end of his life, Samuel, the prophet and judge, said to the children of Israel: "Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you" (I Samuel 12:23).

There is one final truth about the nature of spiritual authority revealed in the Elijah stories: spiritual authority must grow and develop. The stories recorded in I Kings 17 show a definite progression in terms of the prophet's own authority. As Richard D. Nelson puts it: "Elijah moves from passive to active readiness. In the first story he simply obeys and is fed. In the second, he reports what God will do. In the third, he takes an active role and the Lord listens to him" (*First and Second Kings*). If Elijah had not undergone these three tests of faith—each increasing the level of required trust exponentially—it is more than likely he would not have been adequately prepared for the showdown with the false prophets of Baal in I Kings 18. The raising of the widow's son convinced Elijah once and for all that God does hear and answer prayer, and He can do miracles that have never been seen before.

ASK AND APPLY

- » How should believers go about the process of "developing" spiritual authority?
- » Why is it important to develop spiritual authority?

Day 4

The stories recorded in I Kings 17 form a kind of interlocked narrative, united by their focus on the problem of imminent death and the divine gift of life via miraculous means (Nelson). One cannot tell the story of the resurrection of the widow's son without including, in some way, the prior story of the miraculous provision of food for the prophet, the widow, and her son (for over two years). It must be noted that Zarephath was in Sidonian territory, the "heart" of Baal's country. Elijah had taken his fight against the false god to the god's own "homeland."

The text makes it clear this widow prepared the meal Elijah requested with the last bit of food she had been saving for her and her son. She had so much faith in the prophet's words that she was willing to risk starvation in her obedience. The text is also clear that the widow acted "according to the saying of Elijah" (1 Kings 17:15). Prior to her encounter with the prophet Elijah, this woman had been a worshiper of Baal; she did not know nor worship Yahweh, the God of Elijah. She acted, at least at first, on her faith in the prophet. There was something about Elijah himself that inspired trust, hope, and courage in this woman.

▶▶ ASK AND APPLY

- » *Do you think you would be able to trust in and act upon a word from a man or woman of God like this widow did? Why or why not?*
- » *Have you seen others act in faith like this widow did? What happened?*

Day 5

It is important to notice that the woman believed in the prophet before she believed in the prophet's God. The trustworthy character of the prophet led the woman to trust in the character of the God whom the prophet proclaimed. If the widow had not trusted Elijah, she would have continued with her original plan, and that meager meal would have been her last. But because she chose to trust the prophet, her life and her son's life were saved.

In addition, the widow's decision to trust required that Elijah present himself (and his God) as trustworthy. In other words, Elijah's character and demeanor in these stories are crucial to the widow's discovery of the true character of God. Elijah was not simply called to represent God by performing mighty signs and wonders in His name; more fundamentally, Elijah was called to represent God by exhibiting His characteristic faithfulness to His covenant promises.

A life of spiritual authority is rooted in a life of spiritual integrity. And a life of spiritual integrity can only be rooted in a quest to consistently model the character of God revealed fully in Jesus Christ. Without the integrity of Christ-like character, spiritual authority becomes a weapon that is wielded for one's own benefit rather than for the cause of Christ and His kingdom. Sadly, many have been driven away from God because those who claim to represent Him do not display spiritual integrity. We should thank God every day for the blessing of spiritual leaders who lead with integrity.

▶▶ ASK AND APPLY

- » *Name two or three ways spiritual integrity might be differentiated from integrity of character. Can one exist without the other? Why or why not?*
- » *How have you seen integrity demonstrated in the life of someone you respect?*



Parents: Discuss today's lesson with your child at
<http://pentecostalpublishing.com/homeconnection>

The Lord, He Is God

▶▶ FOCUS THOUGHT

God is God alone and has all power.

▶▶ FOCUS VERSE

I Kings 18:39

And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God.

▶▶ LESSON TEXT

I Kings 18:30–39

30 And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down.

31 And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Israel shall be thy name:

32 And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed.

33 And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood.

34 And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time.

35 And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.

36 And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.

37 Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

38 Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

39 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God.

CULTURE CONNECTION

A Grandpa's Prayer

On Friday, December 8, 2017, Rick Carter received a call that his four-month-old grandson was admitted to A. I. duPont Hospital for Children. He was having trouble breathing, his heart was racing, and he was running a fever. Twenty-four hours later the doctors still had no diagnosis and were struggling to stabilize him.

Two days later, on Sunday, December 10, Pastor Steven Beardsley preached a sermon entitled "The Test." What grabbed Rick's attention was his pastor's emphasis that to pray for miracles and healings, a pastor is not always needed because we serve the same God and have the same power within us.

By Monday evening the doctors had diagnosed Bryce with RSV, but he was not better and was looking at another week in the hospital. Rick told his daughter, "I'm coming to pray."

Rick stood alone in the room, holding Bryce. Rick laid his hand on the baby's chest and began to pray. "God, I am stepping out in faith and enacting what my pastor preached. I am Your servant and if You choose not to heal Bryce, You are still God. Please heal Bryce and let him be released tomorrow."

Instantly Rick felt the warm presence of God lay upon his hand and go into Bryce's chest. Bryce began to convulse in his arms and scream. He was shaking and moving so much, Rick thought he was going to drop him. At that moment, the alarms started going off, alerting the nurses' station that there was a problem.

As this was happening, Rick could hear nurses and doctors running to the room. When the first hand touched the doorknob, Bryce was at complete peace and smiling at Rick. The next day, Bryce was released from the hospital at 10:00 am; all his vital signs were normal and stabilized.

LESSON OUTLINE

I. SAMARIA HAD TURNED TO FOLLOW BAAL

- A. Ahab and Jezebel Led the People to Follow Baal (Day 1)
- B. Leaders Can Influence the Hearts of Their Followers (Day 2)

II. SHOWDOWN ON MOUNT CARMEL

- A. The God Who Answers by Fire
- B. We Can Be Confident That Our God Will Answer (Day 3)

III. PROPHETS OF BAAL BUILT AN ALTAR

- A. Offered Their Sacrifice
- B. Those Who Serve False Gods Have No Hope (Day 4)

IV. ELIJAH REBUILT AN ALTAR

- A. Prepared His Sacrifice and Prayed
- B. Those Who Serve the True God Have Hope

V. THE LORD, HE IS GOD

- A. We Serve the One True God (Day 5)
- B. We Have Hope Because God Has All Power

APPROACH

Day 1

Ahab inherited a kingdom that had been led astray for generations. The significance of his tenure was not because of his disobedience so much as it would be the time God would reveal His might and power to the people of His promise. Ahab's marriage to Jezebel brought the situation of Israel's sin to a greater depth. I Kings 16:32–33 states, "He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal that he built in Samaria. Ahab also made an Asherah pole and did more to arouse the anger of the Lord, the God of Israel, than did all the kings of Israel before him" (NIV). The people of Israel followed along as if they had forgotten what God had done for them.

Much like in our society today, the gift of salvation purchased at Calvary seemed to have been lost on a generation seeking self-pleasure and personal fulfillment through the lust of the flesh. Much like in I Kings, humanity today suffers from short-term memory based on carnal desires passed from generation to generation.

ASK AND APPLY

- » *What are some ways our world today reflects the days of King Ahab?*
- » *How does God deal differently with our world today as compared to King Ahab? What is similar?*

Day 2

The Bible gives us numerous examples of leaders who influenced their subordinates—some for good, others for evil. Ahab and Jezebel must have given the people of Israel some false sense that Baal would offer them hope and peace like they had never known. Perhaps the idea of living and fulfilling any desire was appealing. Whatever the reason, the people received and followed the influence given by their leaders. Only a few of the prophets would stand strong for the law of God in the face of adversity. Many of us today are facing similar circumstances; our beliefs are questioned and mocked by those who proclaim faith, yet they serve a different master entirely.

ASK AND APPLY

- » *How do our world leaders influence people today?*
- » *How should we respond to the influence being exerted on us?*

Day 3

The Bible promises God will never forsake us, even though it also gives examples of His people feeling forsaken by God. This is where our faith must come into play. Our relationship with God must be made strong through daily prayer, worship, and Bible study. Only then will our faith hold up when we feel forsaken. During those times we must rely on the words given to us by divine Scripture. Psalm 86:7 states, "In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me."

The examples of holy men in Scripture demonstrate that each had a relationship with God that was nurtured faithfully. When we see faithful men and women of God today doing miraculous things, we can infer they have a faithful relationship with God. Often they speak of hearing from God, giving testimony to what He has spoken

into their lives and ministries. It is important to understand that any time God speaks to us, it will always comply with the Word He has given us through the Scriptures.

ASK AND APPLY

- » *Have you known someone who claimed to have received a word from God, but it went against Scripture? Explain.*
- » *How do you determine when a word is from God?*

Day 4

Jeremiah 10:2 states, “Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them.” There is no hope in anything outside the one true God. Those who serve Him are consistently blessed with goodness, while those who serve false gods and idols are consistently wrought with sin and the consequences that arise from it. God has declared that we should serve no other gods. Deuteronomy 12:30 tells us, “Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise.” Israel had fallen into Baal worship, and God would stay true to His Word by destroying those who served Baal.

ASK AND APPLY

- » *Can you list some things people worship that will not offer them hope?*
- » *Even though these things do not offer hope, why do you think people still worship these things?*

Day 5

Many claim to serve the one true God. Therefore, it stands to reason that the Lord would validate Himself to those who serve Him. God has always revealed Himself to His people in some fashion. Since the Day of Pentecost, He has revealed Himself to the individual believer through the infilling of the Holy Ghost. No other religious group outside of Christianity makes such a claim, to have the Spirit of God living within the believer. This unique characteristic not only sets us apart from others because it is different, but it sets us apart because of the power it gives us. Deuteronomy 4:35 states, “Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the Lord he is God; there is none else beside him.” Once we have received His Spirit, there is no doubt whom we serve.

ASK AND APPLY

- » *Have you ever struggled with doubt? How did you overcome it?*
- » *What would you tell someone who is struggling with doubt?*



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God Sees All

▶▶ FOCUS THOUGHT

Because God sees all things, we should seek to please Him with our actions.

▶▶ FOCUS VERSE

I Kings 21:20

And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee: because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord.

▶▶ LESSON TEXT

I Kings 21:1–7, 17–20

1 And it came to pass after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria.

2 And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money.

3 And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.

4 And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.

5 But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread?

6 And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard.

7 And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.

.....

17 And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

18 Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it.

19 And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.

20 And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee: because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the LORD.

CULTURE CONNECTION

A God of Details

Wendy's husband passed away unexpectedly while they were pastoring. After gaining the strength to move on with her life, she moved to New York. The move was a good change, and God provided her with a nursing job, at which she excelled.

Wendy's son Keith had been waiting for a heart transplant for almost four years, but he had no way of acquiring the level of care he would need after the surgery. While Wendy was in town visiting him, she asked, "Am I going to need to come here for you to get your transplant?" Keith was quite startled and in his gentle, kind way, he responded that he would never ask her to make that sacrifice.

As they were talking, the pastor walked over and joined the conversation. After hearing their conversation, the pastor told them of a recent meeting he had been in. That very week a group of church leaders had been trying to formulate a plan to get Keith the help he needed. They decided it would only work if they could somehow get Wendy to help, but she would need to quit her job and move back to the area.

Within two weeks of that conversation, Wendy was offered two jobs. Both made it possible for her to work from home and move back to help Keith through the transplant process. Within a few months, Wendy moved and Keith's transplant was a success.

God sees the needs of His people, and when we seek to please Him and care for one another, He works out all the details.

LESSON OUTLINE

I. GOD IS OMNISCIENT

- A. Knows All Things (Day 1)
- B. His Knowledge Should Bring Us Comfort

II. NABOTH HAD A VINEYARD (Day 2)

- A. An Inheritance from His Fathers (Day 3)
- B. Ahab Wanted Naboth's Vineyard
- C. God Knows the Enemy Wants to Take What We Have Been Given

III. JEZABEL DEvised A PLAN

- A. Naboth Was Falsely Accused and Stoned (Day 4)
- B. Ahab Let the Injustice Happen
- C. God Knows the Enemy Will Try to Steal, Kill, and Destroy

IV. GOD REVEALED THE TRUTH TO ELIJAH

- A. Nothing Is Hidden from the Lord (Day 5)
- B. We Must Seek to Please the Lord

▶▶ APPROACH

Day 1

Omniscience is defined as “the state of having total knowledge; the quality of knowing everything.” For God to truly be sovereign over His creation, He has to be all knowing. The Bible tells us His knowledge is so vast, He even knows the minutest details, like the number of hairs on your head or every time a sparrow falls to the ground. No detail is so small that God does not know it. No knowledge or thought is so deep that it is beyond Him.

Psalm 139:15–16 declares to us just how omniscient God is when it comes to our person: “My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them” (ESV). Can you imagine that? Before you were even formed, God knew the design of the days that would be in your future. We make our plans and think we know what we are going to do or what is going to happen. But really, only God knows with certainty what tomorrow holds.

▶▶ ASK AND APPLY

- » *Does the fact that God knows everything bring you fear or bring you comfort? Explain.*
- » *Why do you think God does not allow us to know everything?*

Day 2

1 Kings 21:1–13 tells of a man named Naboth who owned a vineyard. Owning land meant a certain amount of security for the person and the person’s family. A vineyard in that day would have been of great value due to the demand for wine for both common people as well as the military. Great value would be placed on such a piece of land, not only for what it produced presently, but also for what it would provide in the future.

▶▶ ASK AND APPLY

- » *Is there something you own that gives you a certain sense of security because you own it?*
- » *Why do people seek security in things?*

Day 3

In ancient times many people did not own land but would farm land and sell whatever was produced on the land. Considering that the majority of people were not wealthy and had limited means, if a man owned property, he would be considered much better off than the man who merely farmed the land of someone else.

In this case, Naboth had inherited the vineyard. This means he understood the worth and the price that had been paid for it by his forefathers. Not only was there value in the land itself, but it would also have had significant emotional value to him and his family. The vineyard was not something to treat casually or sell off just to make life easier.

ASK AND APPLY

- » *What things have you inherited that have great value to you?*
- » *What is something you hope to pass down to your family?*

Day 4

Ahab was quick to tell her of Naboth's refusal to sell the vineyard. Being the evil person she was, Jezebel took it upon herself to devise a plan to kill Naboth and give the vineyard to Ahab. She instructed Ahab to get up and cheer up. She told him she would take care of everything.

Her plan involved writing devious letters and signing Ahab's name to them. The plot was carefully laid out to call an assembly and have Naboth accused of blasphemy. The tragic result was he was carried outside of the city and stoned to death.

ASK AND APPLY

- » *Have you ever been unjustly accused of something? How did you feel?*
- » *What can we do to make sure others are not judged unjustly?*

Day 5

Ahab and Jezebel failed to realize that nothing is hidden from the Lord. I Corinthians 4:5 declares, "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God." In other words, God sees all; nothing is hidden from Him. He will bring out in the light those things that were formed against us in the darkness. Once they are exposed, He will execute judgment on them.

Regardless of what we have gone through, God has not turned a blind eye toward us. He sees everything. The pain and suffering we endure has not slipped by Him unnoticed. God is ever aware and will not let such things go unpunished.

ASK AND APPLY

- » *Can you think of a situation when you observed someone doing evil while acting as if God was not watching?*
- » *Does knowing God sees everything cause you to act any differently than you would if He were not watching? Explain.*



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