

JUST LIKE US



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by [Dave Butts](#)

James gives us some very important teaching on prayer in James 5:13-18:

"Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective."

Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops."

We are told that whatever we are facing...good or bad, we should pray. Good advice. The problem in the text is that the example given of a man of prayer is that of Elijah. However, Elijah, in our eyes, seems to be this amazing man of prayer. How can we be like him?

James, inspired by God, says Elijah was a human being, just like us. He was simply a normal person with no special dispensation from God.

So let's look at a summary of the obedience of Elijah's prayer life:

- I Kings 17:1: Rain did not fall in Israel for several years – "Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, 'As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word.'"
- I Kings 17:7-16: A widow and her son did not starve – "For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah" (v. 16).
- I Kings 17:17-24: The widow's son was raised from the dead – "The Lord heard Elijah's cry, and the boy's life returned to him, and he lived" (v. 22).
- I Kings 18:16-40: Elijah called on the Lord and was victorious over the prophets of Baal on Mt Carmel – "Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The god who answers by fire – he is God" (v. 24).
- I Kings 18:41-46: Rain falls from heaven – "And Elijah said to Ahab, 'Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain'" (v. 41).

Elijah, because of his obedience, had an amazing response to his prayers. And Scripture says that Elijah was a person just like us? How can this be?

We can see the answer to this question when suddenly everything changes for Elijah in I Kings 19:

- He became fearful: “Elijah was afraid and ran for his life” (v. 3).
- He was depressed and discouraged: “...he came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die” (v. 4)
- Elijah, mistaken about what was going on, was filled with self-pity: “I am the only one left and now they are trying to kill me too” (v. 14).

We can all tend to be like this side of Elijah from time to time – fearful, wanting suffering to end, mistaken about what is happening, and filled with self-pity. We can do that!

Here’s my point. Elijah was a flawed man. He had great successes and some failures too. In spite of some amazing answers to prayer, his life was not easy. The purpose of prayer is not to make life easy.

As Elijah learned, when we commit to obeying God and serving Him in prayer, we become an integral part of the purposes of God on planet earth. Elijah got in on some really good stuff, because he prayed. And we can too! As a matter of fact, I will tell you bluntly that God has made us for this.

To pray like Elijah means:

1. Praying prayers that are focused on God’s purposes.
2. Praying prayers that are filled with faith.
3. Praying prayers that involve acts of obedience.

Our job is to pray as Elijah did...with focus, faith, and

obedience so that God will receive glory. The final result always rests in God's capable hands.

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