

Increasing Your Faith

1 Kings 17

Take-home truth: As our faith increases so does our trust in God's plan and provision for our life and for His Kingdom.

#1: OUR FAITH INCREASES BY BEING OBEDIENT TO GOD AND HIS WORD EVEN WHEN IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE.

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."² Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah: ³"Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan. ⁴You will drink from the brook, and I have ordered the ravens to feed you there."⁵ So he did what the LORD had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there. ⁶The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook. 1 Kings 17:1-6 (New International Version)

See 1 Kings 16:29-33.

See Deuteronomy 11:13-17.

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ²He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful." John 15:1-2 (NIV)

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)

Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. ⁸Then the word of the LORD came to him: ⁹"Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food."¹⁰ So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, "Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?"¹¹ As she was going to get it, he called, "And bring me, please, a piece of bread."¹² "As surely as the LORD your God lives," she replied, "I don't have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die."¹³ Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me,

and then make something for yourself and your son. ¹⁴For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the LORD gives rain on the land.' "¹⁵She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. ¹⁶For 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. 1 Kings 17:7-16 (NIV)

See 1 Peter 1:6-7 and John 6:44.

#2: OUR FAITH INCREASES EVEN WHEN GOD ALLOWS DIFFICULTIES IN THE MIDST OF HIS PROVISION.

Some time later the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. He grew worse and worse, and finally stopped breathing. ¹⁸She said to Elijah, "What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?" 1 Kings 17:17-18 (NIV)

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. ⁴Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. James 1:2-4 (NIV)

#3: OUR FAITH INCREASES BY INVITING RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THROUGH PRAYER.

"Give me your son," Elijah replied. He took him from her arms, carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his bed. ²⁰Then he cried out to the LORD, "O LORD my God, have you brought tragedy also upon this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?"²¹ Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried to the LORD, "O LORD my God, let this boy's life return to him!" 1 Kings 17:19-21 (NIV)

#4: OUR FAITH INCREASES WHEN GOD GIVES THE PROVISION WE NEED.

The LORD heard Elijah's cry, and the boy's life returned to him, and he lived. ²³Elijah picked up the child and carried him down from the room into the house. He gave him to his mother and said, "Look, your son is alive!" Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the LORD from your mouth is the truth." 1 Kings 17:22-24 (NIV)

See Isaiah 55:8-9.

In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab son of Omri became king of Israel, and he reigned in Samaria over Israel twenty-two years.³⁰ Ahab son of Omri did more evil in the eyes of the LORD than any of those before him.³¹ He not only considered it trivial to commit the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, but he also married Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and began to serve Baal and worship him.³² He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal that he built in Samaria.³³ Ahab also made an Asherah pole and did more to provoke the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger than did all the kings of Israel before him.
1 Kings 16:29-33 (NIV)

So if you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today—to love the LORD your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul—¹⁴then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and oil.¹⁵ I will provide grass in the fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied.¹⁶ Be careful, or you will be enticed to turn away and worship other gods and bow down to them.¹⁷ Then the LORD's anger will burn against you, and he will shut the heavens so that it will not rain and the ground will yield no produce, and you will soon perish from the good land the LORD is giving you. Deuteronomy 11:13-17 (NIV)

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.⁷ These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 1 Peter 1:6-7 (NIV)

“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.” John 6:44 (NIV)

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD.⁹ “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:8-9 (NIV)