



## Without Hesitation

Working through devotional questions related to 1 Kings 17, two verses captured my attention...

### **1 Kings 17:5, 10**

So he went and did according to the word of the Lord. So he arose and went to Zarephath.

Without question, Elijah trusted God and, without hesitation, obeyed.

Rather than continuing to read the miraculous account of the jars of flour and oil remaining full until the drought ended, the Holy Spirit pushed pause in my soul. It was like the cloud had metaphorically stopped in the sky above me and the Father whispered, "Camp here for a while". I heard a question rise within me, "Why? Why did Elijah do what he was commanded so willingly, so quickly, seemingly so easily?"

And the whisper came again: "Because God had always proven Himself faithful."

I was immediately reminded of an adage I have repeated to myself and others many times: "When people show you who they are, believe them."

Yahweh had shown Elijah who He was. And Elijah believed Him. God had been faithful in the past, so Elijah trusted Him when He said...

### **1 Kings 17:3-4, 9**

"Go to the east and hide by Kerith Brook, near where it enters the Jordan River. Drink from the brook and eat what the ravens bring you, for I have commanded them to bring you food."

"Go and live in the village of Zarephath, near the city of Sidon. I have instructed a widow there to feed you."

Elijah obeyed without hesitation. He knew he could trust the Father.

Now, the deeper question came as I paused in this passage: God has proven Himself faithful, over and over and over again, in my life. So why do I not more consistently respond with full obedience... without hesitation?

As I searched my heart for the answer, I realized that in those moments, my lack of trust had been directly related to my lack of time with the Father. The power to obey, without hesitation, comes directly from the power source, and when I'm unplugged – or only plugged in half-way – I am not abiding in Him. When I'm not abiding in Him, the power source is non-existent or weak and cannot fully supply what is needed to propel me toward the trust necessary for immediate, unwavering faith and obedience.

Even Elijah was not immune from this temptation. God had provided a great victory for him over the prophets of Baal. Elijah had stood firmly on his trust in Yahweh and his belief that God would faithfully display His magnificent power. And God did. He flashed down fire from heaven, and all present proclaimed, "The Lord, He is God; the Lord, He is God." Clearly a triumph that would propel Elijah forward with unwavering faith to all God had ahead for him.

But instead, what happened? Not long afterward, Jezebel threatened his life, and Elijah fled. Ultimately, sitting down under a broom tree and asking God to let him die.

His exhaustion from the marathon he miraculously ran ahead of King Ahab's chariot led him to take his focus off Yahweh and place it instead on himself and his circumstances.

We do the same. The cause of the fatigue or distraction could be anything. It could be the remarkable event we just experienced, the imbalance in our lives, an over-importance we give to our work or other types of commitments, or the overtiredness and despair that result from depending on self. No matter the reason, it is in those moments that our guard is down, our eyes are off the Father, and our attention is outward on the situation that envelops us or inward on our perspectives that consume us.

It is in those times the enemy wins, and we miss genuine, dependent times of prayerful two-way conversation with our Father. We neglect to read His Word, meditate on how we are to practically apply it in our lives, and forego the moment-by-moment reliance on our Savior that is required to remember the truths repeated in His Word.

So... we doubt.

In his book, *Elijah: A Man of Heroism and Humility*, Chuck Swindoll wrote, "Elijah had to get his eyes back on the Lord. That was absolutely essential. He had been used

mightily, but it was the Lord who made him mighty. He stood strong against the enemy, but it was the Lord who had given him the strength."

A response of trust, without hesitation, depends fully on our proximity to the Father.

As His under-shepherds, our responsibility to Him and those we influence should sober us. They should remind us that no matter what, our time with the Father is paramount. To live into our calling as shepherd requires sacrificial choices that keep us connected to the vine and the power source of our Good Shepherd.

And that is what enables us to respond in faith... every time the Father speaks... as we influence those we encounter each day.

## Digging Deeper Questions

1. In your shepherd leadership journey, how has God proven Himself faithful?
2. What are some sacrificial choices you make that keep you connected to the Vine as you lead?
3. Holly listed ways to be in full reliance on the Savior. What are they? And how do you keep them as habits in your own life as an under-shepherd?