

## **James 5 verse 16-18**

*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. 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. 18 Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit.*

What are some of the keys to Elijah's power in prayer? Why was he so effective? Why are our prayers sometimes ineffective? Lets look at Elijah and see why he had favour with God.

### **1. Elijah's Prayer was Effectual**

Effectual means to produce a result or answer - literally to bring something about. What is the one thing that we can be 100% sure will accomplish that for which it was sent out? It is the Word of God.

## **Isaiah 55 verse 11**

*So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.*

The word of God is prophetic. When we pray the word, we literally send it out and we know that it will accomplish that purpose for which it was sent.

## **1 Kings 8 verse 56-61**

*"Blessed be the Lord, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised; not one word has failed of all His good promise, which He promised through Moses His servant.*

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*57 May the LORD our God be with us, as He was with our fathers; may He not leave us or forsake us, 58 that He may incline our hearts to Himself, to walk in all His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His ordinances, which He commanded our fathers. 59 And may these words of mine, with which I have made supplication before the LORD, be near to the LORD our God day and night, that He may maintain the cause of His servant and the cause of His people Israel, as each day requires, 60 so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; there is no one else. 61 Let your heart therefore be wholly devoted to the LORD our God, to walk in His statutes and to keep His commandments, as at this day."*

The word of God is prophetic. When we pray the word, we literally send it out and we know that it will accomplish that purpose for which it was sent. The bible tells us that not one thing of the word will fail but that all will be fulfilled. This will cause faith to arise in our hearts.

So why did Elijah pray that it wouldn't rain? Did he pray it because he was unfeeling, cold and devoid of natural affection for his land and people? Was his prayer out of emotion? No, he prayed in accordance with the word of God.

What was the state of affairs into which Elijah came?

### **1 Kings 16 verse 30-33**

*Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD more than all who were before him. 31 It came about, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he married Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and went to serve Baal and worshiped him. 32 So he erected an altar for Baal in the house of Baal which he built in Samaria. 33 Ahab also made the Asherah. Thus Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel than all the kings of Israel who were before him.*

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Israel had a succession of kings, each one more evil than the last and each one leading Israel more and more into apostasy until the reign of Ahab. He had taken Jezebel as a wife and had built altars and groves in Israel in honour of baal. God was no longer worshipped and the priests were in hiding.

### **1 Kings 17 verse 1**

*Now Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word."*

### **Amos 3 verse 7**

*Surely the Lord GOD does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets.*

God had shown Elijah what He was going to do and Elijah was able to bring it to Ahab and then pray it into existence, because it was in line with the revealed word of God for the situation.

### **Deuteronomy 11 verse 16-17**

*Beware that your hearts are not deceived, and that you do not turn away and serve other gods and worship them. 17 Or the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and He will shut up the heavens so that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its fruit; and you will perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you.*

When we pray we must be sure we pray not out of our emotions, lust or desires but in accordance with the word of God.

### **James 4 verse 3**

*You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.*

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## **2. Elijah's Prayer Was Fervent**

Fervent means hot, ardent, intense. It is not necessary to shout and scream in order to prove that you are earnest in prayer, yet prayer is likened to knocking, seeking and crying in scripture. Elijah believed in what he was doing, he had faith towards God, he knew when he prayed something would happen. Faith is taking hold of the word of God and pleading it before Him.

### **2 Samuel 7 verse 25-26**

*Now therefore, O LORD God, the word that You have spoken concerning Your servant and his house, confirm it forever, and do as You have spoken, 26 that Your name may be magnified forever, by saying, 'The LORD of hosts is God over Israel'; and may the house of Your servant David be established before You.*

Elijah's faith came out of knowing God and walking with Him.

### **1 Kings 19 verse 10**

*He said, "I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."*

### **1 Kings 17 verse 1**

*Now Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word."*

Elijah went to visit Ahab to tell him it wasn't going to rain. How could he be so sure? Because his word was God's word, he had confidence in it. We need to be people of the Word and not people of the world.

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## **Romans 10 verse 17**

*So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.*

## **Hebrews 11 verse 6**

*And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.*

Faith in God's word will give us a fervency in our prayers, because God's word never fails.

## **3. Elijah Was Righteous**

We know that Elijah was very zealous for the Lord God. He had separated himself from the evils of the time. A righteous Christian who is right with God in a practical way, one whose conduct is pleasing to God.

## **James 1 verse 27**

*Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.*

It is not enough to say *Jesus is our righteousness* - yes, He is but we have a responsibility to walk in His ways.

## **John 15 verse 14**

*You are My friends if you do what I command you.*

We need to be taking heed to Jesus' commandments more and more. When we come to pray especially we need to make sure we are right with God - that we do not have unforgiveness, bitterness, resentments, anger, unbelief, hardness of heart, or broken relationships with each other or God.

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## **Psalm 66 verse 18-19**

*If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear; 19 But certainly God has heard; He has given heed to the voice of my prayer.*

Let us pay attention to these things before we come to pray, not only for ourselves, but because in a group situation, these things will affect others.

### **4. Elijah Persevered in Prayer**

After Mount Carmel, things changed in answer to Elijah's prayer for fire.

## **1 Kings 18 verse 39**

*When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The Lord, He is God; the Lord, He is God."*

Elijah had ordered that the prophets of baal be executed and there was no resistance, so the way was open for God's blessing - rain!

## **1 Kings 18 verse 1**

*Now it happened after many days that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year, saying, "Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the face of the earth."*

Elijah himself goes up to Mount Carmel, gets on his knees with his head between his knees so he can't see and begins to pray. But the rain doesn't come straight away. He sends his servant to go and have a look and the report comes back - nothing. Elijah doesn't get discouraged, nor does he give up but he keeps on praying and we read that he sends his servant seven times to look. Elijah was expecting an answer otherwise he wouldn't have kept sending his servant to look. And on the seventh time...

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## **1 Kings 18 verse 44-45**

*It came about at the seventh time, that he said, "Behold, a cloud as small as a man's hand is coming up from the sea." And he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot and go down, so that the heavy shower does not stop you.'" 45 In a little while the sky grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy shower. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel. 46 Then the hand of the LORD was on Elijah, and he girded up his loins and outran Ahab to Jezreel.*

That was enough for Elijah, it wasn't yet raining, but he knew it was coming. He tells his servant to go to warn Ahab. Praise God, what an answer! If I had been Elijah I would have been pretty excited.

So what can we learn from Elijah?

- 1. To pray God's revealed word for the situation.**
- 2. To be fervent and have faith towards God**
- 3. To walk in righteousness, remembering that if we sin we have an advocate with the Father - Jesus Christ.**

## **1 John 2 verse 1-2**

*My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; 2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.*

- 4. To persevere and not give up.**
- 5. To prophecy the Word even when nothing is there.**

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