

## **Standing Alone With God - Elijah - Part 3**

*Howard Hendricks*

### Introduction.

A. Elijah praying for rain. (1 Kings 18:41-46)

B. Effectual, fervent prayer. (James 5:16)

C. James has more to say about prayer than any other New Testament writer and he uses Elijah as his example.

1. I think Elijah is an unlikely choice.

a. He was a mighty prophet and miracle worker and we are not.

b. We wrap him in supernaturalism and regard him as unapproachable.

c. Yet the Scripture says he was a man of like passion as us.

d. It does not call him a miracle worker who prayed but a man like us who prayed.

f. Elijah had the same limitations as us and he prayed.

g. This opens up an exciting vista of truth for we can be like him in our prayer.

2. James gives us a principle that effectual, fervent prayer avails much.

a. James illustrates this by stating that Elijah prayed fervently that it might not rain and it did not rain for three years and six months.

b. James also says that when Elijah prayed again it rained.

c. What is the secret of Elijah's prayer life?

I. There are three truths we need to pay attention to in looking at the prayer life of Elijah.

A. Elijah's prayer was fervent. (1 Kings 18:41-42)

1. Ahab went to eat but Elijah went to pray even though God had promised to send rain. (1 Kings 18:1)

2. True prayer is taking the promises of God and praying until they come to pass.

3. We say prayers but pray little.

4. I once worked on a road crew until physically exhausted but that is nothing compared to earnest prayer.

5. I recommended to a man that he first praise God for ten minutes before getting into prayer. He found it most difficult.
6. Our prayers are cold and lifeless.
7. A college student with a crude manner of speech prayed to receive Christ and ended his pray saying, *“Things are going to be a hell of a lot different now.”*
  - a. Later the Holy Spirit convicted him about swearing.
  - b. Once in public prayer he admitted his ignorance in the presence of other Christians but also the reality of his encounter with Jesus.
8. God often brings us to places of desperation so that we might learn to pray fervently.
9. I am alarmed by the over familiarity we have in the presence of God.
10. Jesus rebuked Peter for sleeping while he was praying. (Mark 14:32)
  - a. Some fall asleep on our knees.
  - b. The busy ministry of Jesus was followed by prayer. (Mark 1:35)
  - c. I am disturbed by the apathy of the contemporary church.
  - d. We need to prostrate ourselves before almighty God.
  - e. We ask and receive little because we ask wrongly.

B. Elijah prayed expectantly. (1 Kings 18:43-44)

1. Once while the seminary was struggling financially I hadn't been paid for three months and I needed \$10 to feed my family a dinner so we all prayed and an old friend sent me \$10. When I show my kids my daughter asked why I was so surprised since they had prayed.
2. Elijah looked for the rain clouds, sending his servant to watch.
3. When Herad arrested Peter the church prayed for him and was stunned when an angel set Peter free. (Acts 12)
  - a. Peter knocked at the door and Rhoda ran to tell the ones praying that Peter was at the door, yet they did not believe her.
  - b. Peter kept knocking and when they finally saw him there they were astounded.
  - c. If God answered some of your prayers today would you be shocked?
4. Elijah sent his servant seven times to look for evidence of rain without doubting.
  - a. Finally the servant announced a little cloud had appeared.

b. Faith persists and believes.

c. Maybe someone tonight has been praying a long time for something; I encourage you to go again and pray until a little cloud appears in answer for you.

C. The effect of a fervent prayer is two fold.

1. Great prayer brings great blessing.

a. Out of nothing comes a little cloud and then a great rain.

b. The small beginning is necessary for the great blessing to come.

2. Great prayer not only changes things but also changes people.

a. The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. (Matthew 9:37)

b. Only prayer will solve this dilemma.

c. A preacher was walking down the street when a man approached him to join their prayer meeting. They needed \$50 and the preacher just happened to have that amount.

d. When the devil fogs a person he does in the area of the crucial not in the area of the trivial.

e. Did it ever occur to you why your prayer life is so often fogged?

f. We all know how important prayer is yet we spend little time on our knees.

g. The devil will even get you to study the Bible and memorize Scripture and witness as long as you don't pray.

h. Witnessing and study and Scripture memory is futile without fervent prayer.

i. We are living in an arid and desolate generation that needs the rain of God to fall.