

The Promises of God

Lesson 4: “Your Needs Will Be Met”

Participant Guide

Greeting

Discussion Questions:

- As the exercise went on, did you change how you tore your dollar?
- How close to real life was this experience? Why?
- Do you notice any changes in how you relate to God when things become financially tight?

The Promise

“And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:9

Discussion Questions:

- In your own words, what is God promising in this verse?
- And just as important, what are some things this verse *isn't* promising? In other words, how have you noticed this promise being misused?

New Story: Eric and Tiffany

Discussion Questions:

- To what aspects of Eric and Tiffany’s story did you relate to the most? Why?

God's Story

God's Word

1 Kings 17:1-16 (ESV)

Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word."² And the word of the LORD came to him:³ "Depart from here and turn eastward and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan."⁴ You shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there."⁵ So he went and did according to the word of the LORD. He went and lived by the brook Cherith that is east of the Jordan.⁶ And the ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook.⁷ And after a while the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land.

⁸ Then the word of the LORD came to him,⁹ "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you."¹⁰ So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, "Bring me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink."¹¹ And as she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, "Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand."¹² And she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. And now I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die."¹³ And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son."¹⁴ For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain upon the earth.'"¹⁵ And she went and did as Elijah said. And she and he and her household ate for many days.¹⁶ The jar

of flour was not spent, neither did the jug of oil become empty, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by Elijah.

Here are my first impressions and questions from reading this passage:

Behind the Scenes

In the first verse of 1 Kings chapter 17, we meet Elijah the Prophet, in action, without any introduction or clues about his background. His appearance and the rise of the prophets mark a turning point in God's struggle for the heart of Israel. King Omri and his successor, Ahab, had led the Northern Kingdom deeper into idolatry. In fact, they had crafted a new religion that centered around the worship of Baal. The very future of the nation of Israel was at stake, so God began to work powerfully through prophets who would warn the nation of its imminent doom. Chapter 17 of 1 Kings opens with Elijah reminding Ahab that Yahweh, not Baal, is the God of Israel. His announcement that there would be no rain was a direct challenge to Baal, who was the Canaanite god of the storm and rain. But the drought, that ultimately lasted three years and six months, impacted more than Ahab and his pagan priests. In this passage, both Elijah and a widow find themselves without the food they need to survive. They are utterly dependent upon God to meet their needs.

Discussion Questions:

- **Do you think it was fair that God's judgment on the land impacted the righteous, as well as those practicing idolatry?**
- **How did Elijah's experience with the ravens help prepare him for his interactions with the widow?**
- **What do you think gave the widow the courage to make Elijah a small meal, when her child was in such poor shape?**

Behind the Scenes

In Deuteronomy 28, Moses outlined a series of blessings and curses that awaited Israel based on the willingness of the Israelites to keep the terms of the covenant. The curses were not intended to crush the Israelites, but to prod them back into a positive relationship with God.

Here are some good insights my friends came up with when they examined the text:

Discussion Questions:

- **Why do you think God chose to provide for Elijah by commanding an impoverished widow with a dying son to feed him? How do you think that experience changed Elijah? How do you think it changed the widow?**
- **God ended up replenishing the woman's flour jar and oil jug for more than three and a half years. What kind of thoughts do you think went through her head whenever she picked up her flour jar or her oil jug?**

Growing

It's one thing to know that God will supply all our needs, but it's another thing to actually trust that he'll meet *your* specific needs. Spend a few minutes now journaling in your Participant Guide, to begin applying this promise of God's provision to your own life. Write responses to these two questions:

- **How did God provide for you in the past when times were difficult?**
- **When do you find it difficult for God to provide for you now? Why is it hard to trust God?**

Allow for five to eight minutes of quiet reflection and journaling.

End the session by thanking God for his provision, even when times are difficult.

