

What Does God Want?

Scripture Reference:

1 Kings 18:41-46 (NIV): *And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain."⁴² So Ahab went off to eat and drink, but Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel, bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees. ⁴³ "Go and look toward the sea," he told his servant. And he went up and looked. "There is nothing there," he said. Seven times Elijah said, "Go back."⁴⁴ The seventh time the servant reported, "A cloud as small as a man's hand is rising from the sea." So Elijah said, "Go and tell Ahab, 'Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.'"⁴⁵ Meanwhile, the sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, a heavy rain started falling and Ahab rode off to Jezreel. ⁴⁶ The power of the LORD came on Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.*

Main Idea: Last gathering we discussed our tendency to offer God improper sacrifices that He does not want. This guide will allow us time to think through scenarios and focus on what God really wants from His children: faith.

3 Ways We Operate in Faith:

1. **We Act on a Sound From God**– We must act in faith according to the sound of what God is doing before we have the evidence of what He has spoken. Elijah told Ahab to go eat and drink so that he would be prepared to leave even before he sees a cloud in the sky.

1 Kings 18:41 (NIV): *And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain."*

Romans 10:17 (NIV) *Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.*

Question: Have you ever felt God asking you to do something that there was no visible justification for? Do you have examples of when you responded in faith or what happened when you did not respond in faith?

2. **We Stay Patient and Persistent:** The time between when God speaks to us, and the fulfillment of that word can often be much longer than any of us would prefer. Elijah put himself in a position to respond at the first sight of God fulfilling His word. Although he was in a great position to see God work, he still had to exercise great patience as it took six no's before he got the one yes. A key sign that we are operating in faith is when we allow ourselves to be put in positions to be heavily ridiculed if what we are acting on does not come to pass quickly. God's timing always ends up being perfect for his children, but rarely preferred by His children.

Why? Because naturally people are impatient. It's only through His Spirit do we have the ability to wait.

1 Kings 18:41 (NIV): *"Go and look toward the sea," he told his servant. And he went up and looked. "There is nothing there," he said. Seven times Elijah said, "Go back."*

Isaiah 40:31 (NASB): *Yet those who wait for the Lord Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.*

3. We Embrace Small Beginnings: Elijah heard about an abundance but after the patience and the persistent checking the cloud that finally appeared was very small. The way we respond when what we see appears to be less significant than what we heard will reveal our faith or lack thereof in God's character. In this moment Elijah has the perfect response as he immediately begins to act on the smallest indicator that the Word God spoke is beginning to come to pass.

Zechariah 4:10 (NLT): *Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin, to see the plumb line in Zerubbabel's hand."*

1 Kings 18:44: *The seventh time the servant reported, "A cloud as small as a man's hand is rising from the sea." So Elijah said, "Go and tell Ahab, 'Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.'"*

Question: Have you learned to embrace small beginnings? Are you currently embracing something small or have a recent example of being challenged in this area?

Closing Thoughts: Has God told you the weather plans for the next three years? Yea, me neither. After reviewing this story, it would be easy to undervalue the need for our obedience because we are not advising kings or presidents on what to do. The beauty is that Elijah felt this same way. As a matter of fact, the feeling of insignificance hit him so hard that he just wanted God to take his life in the very next chapter. Elijah says in 1 Kings 19:4-5, "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep." The greatest battle of faith that we all face, when it comes to our faith, is believing that God sees and values me. If we get ahold of that truth daily, then His Spirit will give us confidence to respond to the sound God puts in our heart, despite how little proof there is to support the sound.

Call to Action: God has given all of us a word to act upon. We often overlook the first act however, which is to hit our knees and wait on God. Commit this week to specifically seeking God about the sound He has put inside of you and how specifically He desires for you to act in faith.