**Week 1 Elijah Committed 0 Courageous 0 Common**

The scriptures are full of men and women that are known for having done amazing things. David defeated Goliath; Esther saved her people from destruction; Moses went toe to toe with Pharaoh; Elijah stood before the prophets of Baal and called down fire from Heaven. Those aren't even a handful of the wonderful accounts we read of in the scriptures involving the children of God doing miraculous things. If you take time and break down each of these accounts and subject them to intense inductive study, you'll see that there is a common theme running throughout **- God working through them as a result of their relationship with Him.** You'll also notice that there is a common method **- Prayer.**

*1.6 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.* 1.7 *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.* James 5:16-17 (NASB)

**If you pick up Elijah's story in 1 Kings 17, it Iooks** **like he simply bursts onto the scene in defiance of** **(wicked) King Ahab and makes a decree that he certainly couldn't carry out on his own.**

*"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."* 1 Kings 17: 1

Did Elijah have the power to keep the rain and dew from falling? Of course not - how then does Elijah accomplish this tremendous miracle? **PRAYER.**

What does James 5 tell us can accomplish much? **Effective prayer of a righteous man.**

In case that word "righteous" threatens you and makes you feel disqualified right from the get-go, think about it properly. If we have been justified by faith then we stand before God having been made righteous through Christ Jesus (Romans 3 :23- 24). Righteous refers to our standing in Christ.

We must also consider our personal walk with the Lord. Even though we are made righteous through Christ Jesus, it doesn't mean that we are on the fast track to perfection. Elijah, as you'll see in the coming weeks was not a perfect man. David, as many of you saw in our previous study was not a perfect man. For both of these men, and many others in the scriptures, the pattern and direction of their life was one that sought to walk uprightly before God, confessing their sin and trying to live in obedience. Consider the words of the Psalmist in Psalms 66: 18 - *"If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear. "*

How then do we come before God almighty in prayer? We come before Him on the basis of the worthiness and merit of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, we come before Him having examined our own hearts and confessing any known sin. That is the starting point, Elijah was a righteous man whose prayers accomplished much. Elijah was a man with a nature just like ours.

Elijah lived during a period when the followers of the LORD were terribly oppressed and the king and his wife were trying to lead the nation into sin and idolatry - yet Elijah's prayers affected the entire nation.

Elijah was able to pray with confidence and boldness because he knew the Living God. His understanding of his own inadequacy led him to pray earnestly; knowing that he was one man standing against a nation who had turned against the LORD. *"Prayer can do anything that God can do."* - E.M. Bounds

What a wonderfully powerful statement that is! And yet, in our lives are there times when our prayers are limited by our unbelief? **Have you ever prayed earnestly and passionately for something only to see it not come to fruition? For a friend/family member to come to the Lord? For a loved one to be healed? For a financial need to be met?** We must not lose heartand give up praying when God delays or perhaps denies our requests. Rather, we must trust in the perfect, sovereign will of our Father who spoke the world into existence to accomplish His will on earth.

Consider for a moment God's response to Paul's request in **2 Cor. 12:7-10.** Paul's request was denied by God almighty because He had a greater purpose in mind; a purpose that Paul didn't always see.

Pastor Steven Cole writes "He knows all the factors, which I never know. I would have prayed for a long and fruitful ministry for John the Baptist, but that was not God's plan. I would have prayed for Jesus to avoid the cross, but that wasn't God's plan, either. I pray many things that seem to me to be for God's glory and in accordance with His will, but He overrules my prayers with His own sovereign
purpose."

**What struggles or roadblocks do you see in front of you when it comes to prayer?** \*Answer as honestly as you can here, as this is a great opportunity for brothers and sisters to offer encouragement and personal testimony to their experiences. \*

**Memory verse:** 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.* James 5: 17