

GOD CARES AND PROVIDES

1 Kings 17

Awareness

Before listening, reflect:

- What do you already know or remember about the prophet Elijah?
- Think about a time in your life when you struggled and needed provision. What effect did that time of need have on your faith? Why?

Whether we are new or seasoned Christians, there are times we all find ourselves wrestling with questions about God's faithfulness. When our prayers seem to be unanswered, we may ask "Is God there?" or "Is he listening to me?" When times are tough, we might question "Did God do this to me?" No matter where we are on our faith journey, questions and doubts arise. We might feel alone or like these doubts make us bad Christians, but in reality, even God's own prophets encountered times of questions and doubts. Let's study the story of Elijah and the widow from Zarephath to discover encouragement that will help us to endure our times of questioning. Together, may we be reminded just how far God's care and provision extend.

Listen: [*God Care and Provides*](#)

Reflection

After listening, consider:

- Has God ever brought the right person into your life at the right time to remind you that he is still God and is still involved? What signs of hope has God given you to remind you that he has not forgotten you and you are not alone?
- Elijah's story demonstrates how God provides in both normal and unusual ways. In segment 2, hosts Dave Bast and Scott Hoezee observe that God first brings Elijah to the brook to provide him water and then has ravens bring him food. Next, God provides for Elijah through the widow, whom Scott notes is actually a very unusual source of life due to the widow's own status in society at the time. Think about your own life. What are some of the normal ways God has provided for you; ways you might not even attribute to God's provision? Can you identify any ways God has provided for you in unusual ways, way that you would not expect to be a source of life?
- Think about the widow's flour and oil. It is possible to argue that her original amount was God's provision for her. She could have used it and protected it, but instead she took a risk and made bread for Elijah and God provided abundantly more for all of them. Is there ever a time where we should protect and use that which God provides for us or should we always give it away if we're asked for it? Why? Is there a balance? If so, how do you identify it?
- Reflect on Philip Yancey's observation that "God goes where he is wanted" (mentioned in segment 2). Where have you seen this to be true? Consider the Israelite context in which this story takes place (see segment 1 for a review of what things were like) and consider your own context. Why and how might we need to be intentionally cautious about applying this concept too flippantly or using it to make assumptions about the state of people's faith?

Related Passages

- **Luke 4:24-26**
- **Isaiah 46**
- **Matthew 6:25-34**

Conclusion

At the close of the episode, Scott makes this observation about the widow and her son: *“They are little people—little people on the margins—outside of Israel even; and yet, God sees them.”* Spend some time reflecting on the stories of the Bible. What other stories can you identify in which God sees and remembers the little, the seemingly unimportant, the people on the margins? Where have you seen it in your life or the lives of those around you? Write about these examples in a letter to yourself and place it in your Bible or another safe place so you can pull it out as a reminder of how far God’s care and provision reaches when you experience doubts about whether or not God cares about you or sees your situation.

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