

Perseverance in Perplexity

1 Kings 17:17-24

¹⁷ Now it happened after these things that the son of the woman who owned the house became sick. And his sickness was so serious that there was no breath left in him. ¹⁸ So she said to Elijah, “What have I to do with you, O man of God? Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?”

¹⁹ And he said to her, “Give me your son.” So he took him out of her arms and carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed. ²⁰ Then he cried out to the LORD and said, “O LORD my God, have You also brought tragedy on the widow with whom I lodge, by killing her son?” ²¹ And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the LORD and said, “O LORD my God, I pray, let this child’s soul come back to him.” ²² Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived.

²³ And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house, and gave him to his mother. And Elijah said, “See, your son lives!”

²⁴ Then the woman said to Elijah, “Now by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is the truth.”

—1 Kings 17:17–24

Read 1 Kings 17:17–24

Hardship, difficulty, and suffering are perplexing. We often wonder, “Why did God allow this?” Even the apostle Paul admitted that he was perplexed at times, yet even when he was perplexed, he did not despair (2 Corinthians 4:8).

We are too quick to blame God when troubles come our way. We often wrongly conclude that God is punishing us for something we’ve done wrong. Other times, we are prone to think that God doesn’t love us. Whenever we begin to think like this, we are forgetting essential truths such as:

- Earth is not heaven.
- In this present world, we will have tribulations.
- Jesus, the Son of God, did not exempt Himself from suffering.
- God even uses suffering to reveal His love and provision.
- Suffering is not forever, but God's goodness is.
- Someday, God will remove suffering from creation.

It is true that God does not always spare us from suffering. However, He does stand with us during trouble, walk with us, offer us His divine comfort, and promise a blessing afterward.

God never stands aloof when we are suffering. He has promised to never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). Pastor Chuck used to say, "Never give up what you know about God for what you don't know about your circumstances."

It is in difficult and perplexing times that we need to lean in more than ever to the truths we know about God, talk honestly to Him about our fears, and continue to hope in Him.

Even the prophet Elijah, who experienced the miraculous provision of God, was perplexed when tragedy struck. Though he was dismayed, like the apostle Paul, he did not despair. Elijah leaned into God, prayed honestly, and continued to hope in Him.

Remember to put yourself in the story as you read 1 Kings 17:17–24, and experience the glorious way God responded.

1. According to 1 Kings 17:17, what happened during this time in the house of the widow?

2. Share your thoughts concerning the widow's response to this tragedy. 1 Kings 17:18
 - a. What are some factors that you think might have contributed to her reaction?

3. Use 1 Kings 17:19–21 to note and comment on:
 - a. Elijah's response

 - b. Elijah's actions

 - c. Elijah's perplexity

 - d. Elijah's perseverance

 - e. Elijah's prayer

4. Record the extraordinary events chronicled in the following verses:
 - a. Verse 22

**FOOD
FOR THOUGHT**

Elijah's posture in prayer *indicated total identification with the boy and his need, and this factor is important when we intercede for others.*²

—Warren Wiersbe

**FOOD
FOR THOUGHT**

The term *upper room* “refers to a temporary shelter or room on the roof, accessible from outside the house. Such structures are common in the Near East. This arrangement would allow the widow not only her needed privacy but would safeguard her reputation” (Patterson and Austel).³

—David Guzik

**FOOD
FOR THOUGHT**

Men always ought to pray and not lose heart.

—Luke 18:1b

- b. Verse 23
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- 5. According to 1 Kings 17:24, what did the widow come to believe about:
 - a. Elijah

 - b. What he spoke

 - 6. Share your thoughts concerning the following:
 - a. Trouble

 - b. Prayer

 - c. Elijah

 - d. The widow

 - 7. What is your greatest takeaway from 1 Kings 17:17–24?