

BEFORE THE FIRE

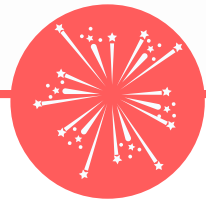
SERIES BREAK



WORD

Answer me, LORD, answer me, so these people will know that You, LORD, are God, and that You are turning their hearts back again.”

1 King 18:37
(Read also 1 King 18:20-39)



SPARKS

- Have you ever prayed for something that God didn't answer right away?
- What is the longest you've waited for an answered prayer? What did God teach you during that season?
- If God delayed answering one of your prayers, would your relationship with Him become stronger or weaker?

When people think about the story of Elijah on Mount Carmel, they often remember the fire that fell from heaven. It was a remarkable miracle that demonstrated God's power before all of Israel. Yet before the fire came, Elijah repaired the broken altar, prepared the sacrifice, and prayed. Many of us are waiting for God to answer our prayers. We long for healing, provision, restoration, direction, or breakthrough. While waiting, it is easy to become focused on the answer rather than on the God who hears us. The story of Elijah reminds us that God is not only interested in sending the fire. He is also interested in preparing our hearts before the fire comes. Before God performed a miracle, He was restoring a relationship.

1. BEFORE THE FIRE, ELIJAH REPAIRED THE ALTAR

1 Kings 18:30

"...He repaired the altar of the LORD that had been torn down."

Elijah did not begin with the miracle. He began by repairing the altar. The altar represented worship, surrender, and Israel's relationship with God. A broken altar reflected a broken relationship. Before asking God to move, Elijah restored what had been neglected. Likewise, seasons of waiting reveal the condition of our hearts. While we wait for God's answers, He may first be inviting us to return to Him, rebuild our prayer life, and deepen our walk with Him. What are some "broken altars" that you may need to rebuild?

1

2. BEFORE THE FIRE, ELIJAH PRAYED WITH THE RIGHT PURPOSE

1 Kings 18:36-37

...Answer me, LORD, answer me, so these people will know that You are God and that You are turning their hearts back again."

Elijah's prayer was not centered on himself but on God's glory. He desired that the people would recognize the Lord and return to Him. Prayer is more than presenting requests. Prayer is how we remain close to God and align our hearts with His purposes. As we continue praying, God not only works in our circumstances but also transforms our hearts to desire what He desires. What does Elijah's prayer teach us about the purpose of prayer?

2

3. BEFORE THE FIRE BECAME A MIRACLE, GOD WAS ALREADY RESTORING HEARTS

1 Kings 18:38-39

‘When all the people saw it, they fell prostrate and cried, ‘The LORD - He is God! The LORD - He is God!’”

The fire was spectacular, but it was not God’s ultimate purpose. God answered Elijah’s prayer so that the people would know Him and return to Him. The miracle pointed beyond itself to the God who alone is worthy of worship. In the same way, God can use our lives and our testimonies to point others back to Him. The greatest testimony is not simply that God answered our prayers, but that our faithful walk with Him inspires others to seek Him as well.

LIVE IT!

- Is your desire for God's answer greater than your desire for God Himself?
- How can your testimony encourage someone else to trust God during their own season of waiting?
- In what ways can your life point people back to Christ?



PRAYER

- Thank God for remaining faithful even when His answers require waiting.
- Ask Him to restore any areas where your relationship with Him has grown distant.
- Pray for faith to trust His timing and continue seeking Him before seeking the miracle.
- Ask God to use your life and testimony to point your family, friends, coworkers, and community back to Him.

