

Elijah Is Fed by Ravens

Level D | Lesson 1 | Teacher Overview

Key Message: Notice what is leading you.

Texts: I Kings 16:29-33
I Kings 17:1-7

Activity Options (choose 2 or 3)

1. Talk About It
2. Take Action: Play and Replay
3. Explore: Motives Behind Our Actions
4. Meditate and Activate



I Kings 17:6-7

The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook. And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

Talk About It

I Kings 16:29-33: Ahab Is King

I Kings 17:1-7: Elijah Is Fed by Ravens

1. The leading characters in our stories in this series are King Ahab, Jezebel his wife, and Elijah the prophet. Ahab was king of the northern kingdom of Israel. He was “more evil than all who came before him.” At the urging of his wife Jezebel, he led people away from worshiping the Lord, creating wooden images of Baal for them to worship instead.
2. The first commandment is: “I am the Lord your God...You shall have no other gods before Me” (Exodus 20:1). What might this mean in your life? (putting the Lord first—before everything else.) What kinds of “false gods” might we put before the Lord in our own lives? (Making worldly concerns more important than the Lord—money, possessions, popularity, etc.)
3. Elijah was sent to Ahab and Jezebel telling them to return to the Lord. If you were Ahab, how might you feel about this? (As a comparison, think of a time when your parents asked you to do something, but you did not want to. How might you feel if a brother or sister reminds you that you are not obeying?)
4. Ahab’s choices brought a drought. What are the long-term consequences of drought? (soil dries out, streams disappear, crops cannot grow) Rain pictures true ideas from the Lord that are soaked up—willingly received—by our minds when our minds are open toward Him. Drought comes when we love ourselves above all else (i.e. we “worship Baal”) and so close our minds towards the Lord and heaven. Spiritual famine follows. It pictures a time when truth is absent from our thoughts and from the good actions of our lives.
5. At the Lord’s command Elijah camped out by the brook Cherith where he was fed by ravens. The deeper meaning of this story appears to be different from the literal story. Being fed by ravens pictures a time when we are fed by false ideas of the truth. What might this look like? (e.g. we may believe that we are doing something out of kindness to a friend, but if we look more deeply at our motives, we may see that we are hoping our friend will invite us to do something with them.)
6. Can you give some other examples of a time when someone might act one way, but really care about something quite different?
7. A good way to become aware of our motives is to ask: WIIFM—What’s In It For Me? This week, try to notice times when you want yourself to appear important, loved, or well respected. Also notice the times when you care more about other people than yourself.

Take Action: Play and Replay

I Kings 17:1-7: Elijah Is Fed by Ravens

Students will take a closer look at the challenge of interpreting motives from actions. Students will act out scenarios involving zeal (a deep love of something good) which can be mistaken for anger (e.g. child runs out in front of a car and a parent yells at them). Challenge students to replay situations to reflect alternative ways to act in these situations.

Supplies Needed for Each Student

- copy of “Play and Replay” (see attached sheet)

Discussion

Encourage discussion as the activity progresses. Wrap up the discussion by calling to mind that only the Lord knows a person’s inner motives and loves. We are unable to judge what other people are thinking or intending—even when there is a strong appearance of good or bad motives.



Play and Replay!

I Kings 17:1-7: Elijah is Fed by Ravens

The ravens who bring food to Elijah picture false ideas. They appear to be doing something good for him—sustaining him while he is in the wilderness. But eventually Elijah leaves the wilderness and these false ideas that fed him are replaced. Today’s activity takes a closer look at the relationship between motives and actions, and how we may be misled into assuming someone’s motives from the appearance of their actions.

Identify Your Motives

It is not always easy to see why we choose to behave in certain ways. In any given situation, we may believe that we are acting from kindness, courtesy and generosity. But if we look at our actions through the Lord’s eyes, we may discover that instead of having kindness in our hearts, we are looking for a favor; instead of courtesy, we are hoping to gain a good reputation; and instead of generosity, we are waiting for a pay-back.

Zeal Masquerading as Anger

When we see others acting angrily, selfishly, or greedily, we may also not be getting the whole picture. It may be difficult for us to know the motives of others, and even harder for us to know our own motives. The Heavenly Doctrines suggest the following:

When the loves of good people are attacked, they respond with zeal rather than anger. Inwardly, this is charity, goodness, and mercy. (see *Apocalypse Explained* 693:2)

Play!

- Brainstorm a list of situations in which a person’s actions might look like one thing—for example anger, but are actually motivated out of concern for another’s well-being. An example might be the way a mother responds when a little child is lost and then found, or the way a coach talks to his team at half-time.
- Make up a skit to illustrate a scenario in which a person’s good motives lead them to act in a way that may be mistaken for anger or selfishness, then perform it.
- After the dramatization discuss alternative ways a person could act in the same situation. Does behavior make a difference in how we respond to other people? How?

Replay!

- Take turns dramatizing situations in which a person is motivated by selfish concerns. An example might be a friend borrowing clothing without asking permission or damaging something you own and then hiding it from you, hoping that it won’t be discovered.
- After dramatizing a scenario illustrating a selfish response, call out “Replay!” and reenact the same situation with a more appropriate response.

Explore: Motives Behind Our Actions

I Kings 17:1-7: Elijah Is Fed by Ravens

Elijah was fed by ravens in the wilderness. The ravens picture false ideas that may sustain us for a time, but must be replaced by true ideas for us to grow spiritually. Today's discussion takes a closer look at the spiritual dimensions of friendship, focusing on the inner qualities of true friendship.

Supplies Needed for Each Student

- copy of discussion page "Motives Behind Our Actions" (see attached sheet)
- *optional*: Paper and pen or pencil

Discussion

Follow discussion guidelines. To extend this activity further, distribute paper and pens and encourage students to consider

"What's In It For Me" by themselves. If appropriate, invite the students to share general observations they may have made about themselves, e.g. I was surprised by _____, or I've never thought about _____ before. Here are a few questions to help you:

In thinking about your relationship with another person:

1. Was there anything that surprised you?
2. How might you go about making changes in this relationship?
3. What do you have control over in a relationship, and what are you unable to control?



Motives Behind Our Actions

I Kings 17:1-7: Elijah is Fed by Ravens

Elijah was fed by ravens in the wilderness. The ravens picture false ideas that may sustain us for a time, but must be replaced by true ideas for us to grow spiritually. We can look for false ideas in our own lives by exploring the motives that lie within our actions.

Who is good?

A person who

- is always willing to give you advice?
- apologizes when they have hurt you?
- is friendly to someone but criticizes them behind their back?
- listens to your concerns?
- goes to church each week?



1. Can a person's behavior tell you whether a person is good or not?
2. Why or why not?

Who Are Your Friends?

People who

- are fun to be with?
- like the same kinds of things you like?
- believe the same kinds of things you do?
- are there to talk to when you need help?
- make you feel good?

1. What makes a true friend?
2. Have you been friends with someone who let you down? Did your opinion of the other person change when this happened? How?
3. Are you a true friend to someone if you say nothing when you know they are being dishonest?
4. What are we really making friends with in another person?

Who are the Lord's Friends?

The Lord

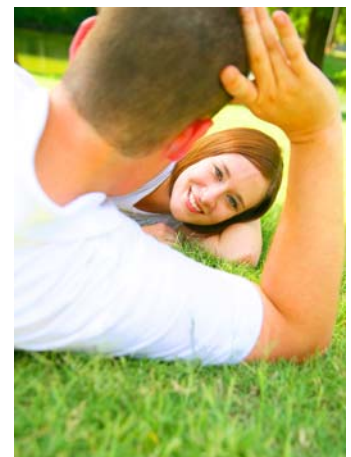
- is friends with people who do whatever He commands (John 15:14)
- laid down His life for His friends (John 15:13)
- calls us His friends (John 15:15)
- was betrayed by His friends
- called Judas "friend" even after he betrayed Him

1. The Lord loves everyone—and no matter what we do, He will remain our Friend. But every friendship involves two people. How can we be a friend to the Lord?

What's In It For Me?

Focus on one friendship. Ask yourself:

- Why do I like this person?
- What's in it for me?
- Am I a true friend to this person?
- What is one thing I can do this week to be a real friend to him or her?



Motives Behind Our Actions

I Kings 17:1-7: Elijah is Fed by Ravens

Elijah was fed by ravens in the wilderness. The ravens picture false ideas that may sustain us for a time, but must be replaced by true ideas for us to grow spiritually. We can look for false ideas in our own lives by exploring the motives that lie within our actions.

Who is good?

A person who

- is always willing to give you advice?
- apologizes when they have hurt you?
- is friendly to someone but criticizes them behind their back?
- listens to your concerns?
- goes to church each week?



1. Can a person's behavior tell you whether a person is good or not? (No! Only the Lord knows that.)
2. Why or why not? (A person's inner motivations might not be what they appear to be on the surface. Also, a single act or mistake may not show us the whole picture.)

Who Are Your Friends?

People who

- are fun to be with?
- like the same kinds of things you like?
- believe the same kinds of things you do?
- are there to talk to when you need help?
- make you feel good?

1. What makes a true friend?
2. Have you been friends with someone who let you down? Did your opinion of the other person change when this happened? How?
3. Are you a true friend to someone if you say nothing when you know they are being dishonest?
4. What are we really making friends with in another person?

Who are the Lord's Friends?

The Lord

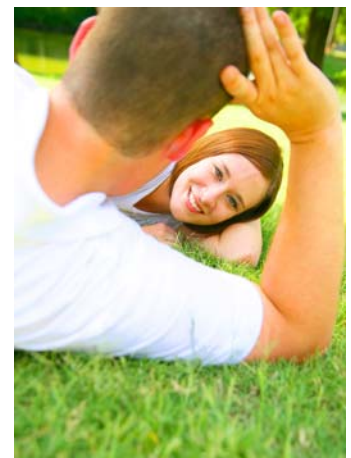
- is friends with people who do whatever He commands (John 15:14)
- laid down His life for His friends (John 15:13)
- calls us His friends (John 15:15)
- was betrayed by His friends
- called Judas "friend" even after he betrayed Him

1. The Lord loves everyone—and no matter what we do, He will remain our Friend. But every friendship involves two people. How can we be a friend to the Lord? (Do justly, love mercy, walk humbly with our God.)

What's In It For Me?

Focus on one friendship. Ask yourself:

- Why do I like this person?
- What's in it for me?
- Am I a true friend to this person?
- What is one thing I can do this week to be a real friend to him or her?

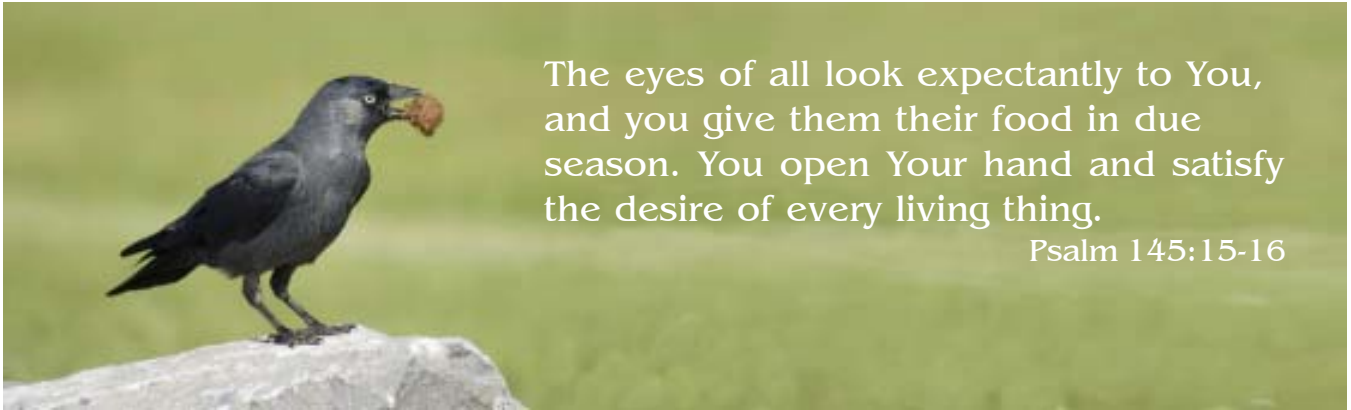


Meditate & Activate

Thinking or meditating about a passage from God's Word and finding opportunities to put it into action can be a powerful experience. Keep this card intact or cut out the illustrated quotation to use as a bookmark or put up somewhere in your home.

Meditate: What spiritual qualities are you in need of today—patience, cheerfulness, kindness? Do you ever feel as if you are in a famine, as if you lack what you need to grow spiritually?

Activate: Look for a way that the Lord is fulfilling one of your spiritual needs. You might see Him meeting your need for peace in a beautiful tree, or your need for happiness in sharing laughter with a friend. Expect the Lord to be present today and notice the spiritual food He is offering to you.



The eyes of all look expectantly to You,
and you give them their food in due
season. You open Your hand and satisfy
the desire of every living thing.

Psalm 145:15-16

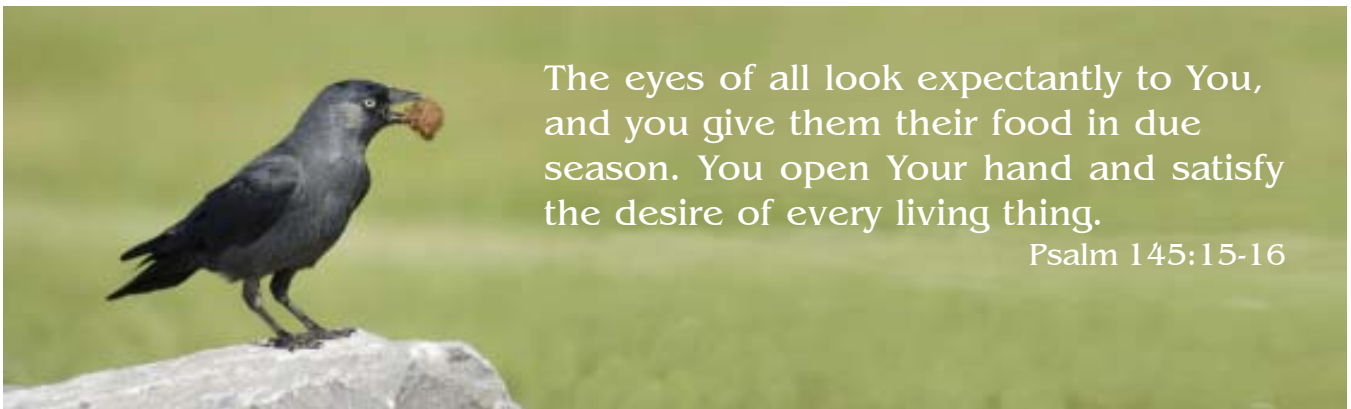
To make a stronger bookmark, print this page on heavy paper or cardstock, cut in half and give half to each student.

Meditate & Activate

Thinking or meditating about a passage from God's Word and finding opportunities to put it into action can be a powerful experience. Keep this card intact or cut out the illustrated quotation to use as a bookmark or put up somewhere in your home.

Meditate: What spiritual qualities are you in need of today—patience, cheerfulness, kindness? Do you ever feel as if you are in a famine, as if you lack what you need to grow spiritually?

Activate: Look for a way that the Lord is fulfilling one of your spiritual needs. You might see Him meeting your need for peace in a beautiful tree, or your need for happiness in sharing laughter with a friend. Expect the Lord to be present today and notice the spiritual food He is offering to you.



The eyes of all look expectantly to You,
and you give them their food in due
season. You open Your hand and satisfy
the desire of every living thing.

Psalm 145:15-16