

## **GREAT LESSONS FROM THE LESSER KNOWN**

Week 4: Living In Between Miracles:  
Elijah and Elisha  
2 Kings 2

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Words of Encouragement Days 64-70



Heroes often emerge from **unexpected places**, teaching us **important lessons** about what to do, and sometimes, what not to do. Many of these characters seem larger than life — overcoming unbelievable odds on their path to victory. However, some of the best lessons come from less prominent stories — people that appear, at first glance, easy to discount. **Great Lessons from the Lesser Known** looks more closely at these obscure characters. Learn how **God can use anyone** to accomplish great things. You don't need to be a powerful and wealthy leader **to have influence**. **Obeying God**, even in the small things, can impact history.

A significant life is not always the most noticed life or the biggest life but it is a significant life. It is a meaningful life. With this series, we'll look at some of the lesser known people in the Old Testament and what we can learn from them. In the Old Testament there's the Big Three. There's Abraham, there's Moses, there's David. We talk about these guys. **But there are many other men and women mentioned in the Bible who can help teach us some very significant lessons.**

### **This Week's Memory Verse:**

"For you are great and do wonderful deeds. You alone are God." Psalm 86:10

## GREAT LESSONS – Day 64

*"His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. 2 Peter 1:3-4*

### UNWAIVERING TRUST: YOU ARE COMPETENT

**SOME** would say the most important thing about us is how we see God, and the second most important thing about us is what comes to mind when we think about ourselves – the mirror in our minds. If that is true, and I strongly believe it is, then shame is an enemy which intends to distort our identities. Among all the fears and feelings that warp our perspectives, shame is particularly devastating because it attacks not just our behavior but our identity. Shame causes us to believe we are unworthy of love or acceptance.

When we encounter the gospel and its promise to address our shame, our spirit responds. We are drawn to freedom. We instinctively know we need someone to rescue us from this debilitating force. In Jesus, we find the antidote to our deepest, most personal wounds.

So how do you deal with your shame? The good news is next, but facing the truth always precedes being healed by the truth. Taking time to do a little self-analysis about how you cope with feelings of shame is necessary. Such reflection may make you feel uncomfortable, but your heavenly Father wants to help you, and that begins with honesty. You have nothing to be ashamed about that is not common to the human condition. You're not a freak or

an oddball. Allow God's forgiveness and not your shame to define you. In Ephesians 1:15-23 we learn that Paul itemizes a series of requests that are life changing for all who believe, and this is my prayer for you. I ask that God would give you those "aha" moments by His Holy Spirit so you may see into those truths about adoption and redemption and realize, *oh, this is how it applies to me and the sin and shame of my past. This Holy Spirit of Revelation is unveiling the truth to me so that I, too, would see like never before and know God more personally and intimately.*

When the eyes of our hearts are enlightened by the Holy Spirit, our minds begin to know the truth, and our lives start to change. Paul is letting us know that guilt, shame, and every other debilitating condition we experience are futile in the face of the Power at work within us. Faith is always rooted in the promises of God, and God's promises are in His Word.

### TODAY'S PRAYER

Lord, I thank You today for Your healing – which I have learned begins with honesty. I need strength to be honest with myself in order to identify my shame, call it out, and bring it to You. Thank you for being my source of strength and helping me to be honest with myself. Most of all, Lord, thank You for Your love for me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

**Love the way Jesus loves!**

## **GREAT LESSONS – Day 65**

*“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” Romans 8:1*

### **UNWAIVERING TRUST: YOU ARE BEAUTIFUL**

**Shame** and guilt go hand in hand, one feeding the other. They are partners of destruction, eroding our lives, and as we do with shame, most of us carry guilt round for years. We all struggle with it – no expectations. How are you wrestling with guilt? I’d encourage you to whisper a prayer and ask God to give you the courage and strength to be honest with yourself and with Him about guilt. He wants to help you remove it, and He can! Removing our guilt is at the heart of the gospel.

We usually deal with guilt in unhealthy ways. We tend to do as Adam and Eve did – we hide it. Then we deny it or excuse it. Then we blame other people. We all have a drug of choice to cover our guilt. Mine is work. I was told year after year that I worked too much, but I responded with denial, excuses, and by continually shifting the blame. And I kept on working.

The good news is that God has a comprehensive solution for our guilt, and it’s extremely effective. But in order to take advantage of it, we have to be honest. Denying our symptoms, like I did for years by working too much, doesn’t lead us to His solution. We first have to identify the symptoms and behaviors; then we can explore the guilt that creates them. When we do, God begins a healing process that not only removes the symptoms but deals with the cause. Christ desires to replace our guilt with His peace.

In Ephesians 2:4-7, we hear Paul declare something so glorious – God, who is rich in mercy, loves us deeply and relentlessly and will not leave us in our sinful condition. When we were dead in our transgressions – in our hostile rebellion against Him – He made us alive with Christ. We were once in the kingdom of darkness, but now we are in the kingdom of light. That’s why God sees us differently now. We are wanted, secure, valuable, competent, and, yes, even beautiful. For years, I promised my family that I wouldn’t work so many hours. None of those efforts were effective until I realized the "why" behind my behavior. I was carrying a load of guilt. Deep down I felt like I didn’t measure up. I was trying to earn God’s love and forgiveness and to get people to like and admire me. It was when I answered the question of "why" that change began to occur. He can and will do the same if you ask Him to do it. As our loving Father, He loves to hear us ask!

### **TODAY’S PRAYER**

Lord, Sometimes I ask myself why I do what I do. Help me to be honest with myself and my actions, and to confess to You what I need to in order to start fresh with You. Thank You for the promises found in Your word - that You love me unconditionally, love to have me ask for Your help, and stand ready in a moment's notice to answer me with Your guiding hand. “Those who trust in the Lord will not be disappointed!” (1 Peter 2:6) In Jesus’ name, Amen.

**Love the way Jesus loves!**

## GREAT LESSONS – Day 66

*“Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.”  
Ephesians 3:20-21*

### UNWAIVERING TRUST: YOU ARE CALLED

**HOW** do you handle feelings of hopelessness, frustration, or times when you sense that life is purposeless? I'm not sure how you would categorize all of those feelings, but I think the word 'angst' captures most of them. Angst is a feeling of deep anxiety and dread that is unfocused and hard to identify, yet it is often accompanied by depression. It is a common human experience, and either we've been there ourselves or know someone who struggles with it at these depths.

As with so many of these attitudes and distortions of our true selves, responses to angst tend to go in one of two directions, either overcompensation or withdrawal, and each of those directions can take many forms. If you have ever had any experience with the emotions or attitudes related to angst, which direction have you tended to go? One of the greatest problems with hopelessness and depression is the sense that nothing will help; that even if something looks like it might help, it probably isn't worth trying. This set of emotions has a paralyzing effect at a time when what people need most is to get up and do something.

Whatever we do, we can't let the feeling of angst paralyze us. As soon as we realize this feeling, we can take a step toward God, and He will take every other step toward us, no matter how many it takes. But we have to

respond. Knowing who we are created to be and what God has given us through salvation in Christ goes a long way toward relieving our feelings of angst. When we answer by faith God's call into a new relationship (Ephesians 1:3-4), we are in the position to hear our new purpose (Ephesians 2:10). The purpose for each of us is carefully chosen by God. We call this specific calling a holy ambition, and it becomes His means of using us for reaching the world with the good news of Jesus through the power of His Holy Spirit.

No achievement, wealth, or worldly influence compares with experiencing the meaning and purpose of our calling. God brought us into a new relationship with Jesus and gave us a calling to fulfill our purpose. The pursuit of your holy ambition significantly diminishes the power of angst that would otherwise sabotage your calling and life.

### TODAY'S PRAYER

Lord, Give me today the wisdom needed so I can determine what my dream or ambition might be. I realize You have created me for good works – works that fit in with the gifts, passions, and opportunities You have given me. I realize that determining my dream or ambition is a journey, a journey I am willing to walk with You. Thank you for being there with me every step of the way! In Jesus' name, Amen.

**Love the way Jesus loves!**

## GREAT LESSONS – Day 67

*“One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When He finished, one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.” Luke 11:1*

### MEETING WITH GOD: TEACH US TO PRAY

I want to share with you about a kind of prayer that is most pleasing to the Lord. You see, not all of our praying blesses the heart of God. Some prayers can be said without any real heart behind them. If we don't have *our* heart into our prayers, it is difficult to imagine they will reach *His* heart. With the help of the Holy Spirit, however, I trust that learning about prayer will change the way we pray from now until Jesus comes.

To begin, we need to understand prayer is not meant to be complicated. It has sometimes been made too complicated by well-intentioned teachers who have turned it into formulas, strategies, and theatrics. I am not condemning any of this, but I would like to point out to you the kind of praying I believe pleases the Lord most. In reality, I believe the kind of prayer that pleases God is very simple and easy to understand. It is so simple, in fact, a little child can pray in a way that pleases Him.

So let me begin by saying I believe most Christians *want* to pray. At one time on our walk with the Lord, we all may have prayed with some consistency. After a while, though, many believers quit and later end up convicted by their prayerlessness. Therefore, to begin learning how to pray, we can start by looking at the disciples when they said to Jesus, *“Lord, teach us to pray”* (Luke 11:1). They would not have asked unless they wanted to learn.

Just like the disciples, I believe that most people would love to be faithful in prayer, but they don't know *how* to be faithful. So we need to start a discussion on prayer by identifying the basic problem with prayer which is that many people simply don't understand the *purpose* of prayer. Until we grasp this vital purpose, we will find it difficult to maintain a fulfilled, meaningful life of prayer.

### TODAY'S PRAYER

Father, Place in all of us a heart that is easily wooed to Your presence. Help us to pray through our trials . . . to listen closely to Your Holy Spirit in our secret time of communion with You and to put all our confidence in Your Word. In these ways, we can know our prayers are pleasing to You. In Jesus name, Amen.

**Love the way Jesus loves!**

## GREAT LESSONS – Day 68

*“Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes . . . Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand . . . Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”*  
*Ephesians 6:11, 13, 17*

### MEETING WITH GOD: TOTAL CONFIDENCE

**JESUS** is the living Word of God. When you are shut in with Him in prayer, the Holy Spirit will always leads you to God’s revealed Word. He will build up your faith by feeding you from the Bible even while you’re in the secret closet! In Ephesians 6:11, 13, 17, we are instructed that it is the armor of God which enables us to withstand the enemy’s fiery arrows in times of crisis. God’s Word is an important element to that armor, strengthening us for spiritual warfare.

Often when you receive specific instructions from the Lord, His Spirit will whisper, “Now turn to . . .”, directing you to a passage of scripture. God’s Word will speak directly to you, telling you how to get through your crisis. When you open up His word, you will find life-giving truth. You will find direction for your concerns. You will find encouragement, instruction, training, hope, and purpose from Him. When we take time to be alone with God and invite Him to feed our spirit through intimate communication, He will! In fact, He says "come to me" and "come boldly to the throne of grace." He wants to meet with us every day. So take time today to meet Him, read His word, talk over your day with Him, and see what He has to say!

## TODAY'S PRAYER

Lord, Thank You for the gift of Your Word. Help me this week to spend time alone with You so You can speak to my heart about living each day for You. Thank You for your open invitation to "come" and meet with You freely at any time of the day or night. Feed me by Your Holy Spirit, Lord, when I meet with You so that I may know what steps to take each day. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

**Love the way Jesus loves!**

## GREAT LESSONS – Day 69

*“My sheep listen to My voice: I know them, and they follow Me.” John 10:27*

### MEETING WITH GOD: PRAY YOUR WAY THROUGH

**WHEN** you spend time with Jesus, you receive direction from Him. So just how does He communicate? Does He tell you what to do and when and how to do it? Some Christians have a hard time believing God does this, but we know He does because in John 10:27, Jesus said, “My sheep hear My voice ... and they follow Me”. Therefore, He definitely communicates to us. His method of communication may differ from person to person, but for each one, He communicates in a way the person will understand and know His voice.

God communicates all of the time, but perhaps the time we want to hear His voice most is when we are faced with or in the middle of a trial. There is no way through the trial except to get alone with Jesus and cry, “Lord, You’re the only one on earth who can help me. Only You know the way through this trial, so I’m going to stay here until You tell me what to do. I’m not going anywhere until You speak to my heart!”

This is the kind of “praying through” that pleases God. It means stopping everything, all activity, until you hear His voice. Only then will you hear Him speak clearly to your heart as He instructs you: “You’ve got to make things right with this person.” Or, “You’ve got to make restitution here.” Or, “Just stand still until next week. Don’t be in a hurry. Sit in My presence and trust Me.” He will give you clear directions if you take time to listen!

## TODAY'S PRAYER

*“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace.”*

Numbers 6:24-26

**Love the way Jesus loves!**

## GREAT LESSONS – Day 70

*“Going a little farther, He fell with His face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as You will.” Matthew 26:39*

### MEETING WITH GOD: BREAKTHROUGH PRAYER

**YOU** may have heard of a breakthrough prayer. What is a breakthrough prayer? Jesus prayed a breakthrough prayer at Gethsemane. It is the “ultimate prayer” and by ultimate, we mean the end of a series. By the time Jesus came to Gethsemane, everything else had been tried and there was one prayer left that would move mountains and shake hell. It was the ultimate, or final, prayer, and it was simply this: “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.” Jesus finished his pleading and said, in essence, “I have prayed, wept, fasted, and done everything I can do. Now, Father, I unload my soul to You in total trust. Your will be done.”

Have you ever presented this “ultimate prayer” to the Lord over a situation? Have you said,

- I have prayed, fasted, and interceded over this matter.
- I have asked, knocked, sought, and believed.
- Yet what is happening now is not what I want.
- I don't think I can handle it.

Then at that point you can add, “But You are the Almighty God, and I cast everything into your hands. Now, Father, do what You want to do when You choose to do it. I rest in Your promise to me.”

This is the rest that remains for God's people today, the rest referred to in Hebrews 4. It is to come into the blessed promise of the New Covenant, in which God

declares to us, “I will be a Father to you, and you will be My child” (2 Samuel 7:14). Beloved, you cannot move your mountain until you pray this ultimate prayer. But when you pray it, God will open your eyes to something amazing, and you will no longer miss the answer to your prayer when it comes.

### TODAY'S PRAYER

Lord, Thank You for Your many examples of how to pray that are found in Your Word. Today we learned about breakthrough prayer. Help me to learn to pray the kind of prayer that moves the mountains in my life and opens my eyes to help me to see Your answer to the prayers that affect my life. Give me strength to pray such a prayer, and thank You ahead of time for answering it. In Jesus' name, Amen.

**Love the way Jesus loves!**