THE HALF LOAF OF BREAD

Forty-year-old Valentina hadn’t eaten a crumb in more than six months because of a food shortage in the country of Georgia. Maya offered her some bread. “Please, take this,” she said. “You once walked 15 kilometers [nine miles] to help us. This is a gift that I want to give you, but you are refusing to accept it.”

Valentina finally relented. The women decided to divide the bread with a knife from the kitchen of the house church, where about 40 people gathered regularly to pray and read the Bible under the leadership of Valentina’s husband, Adventist Pastor Pavel Dmitrienko.

Partway home the couple met an elderly woman on a bridge, who asked, “Daughter, would you happen to have some bread?” Valentina immediately removed the half loaf from her purse and presented it to the woman.

The elderly woman wept as she accepted the bread. “Thank you,” she said, tears streaking her dirty cheeks. “I haven’t eaten in three days. You’ve saved me.”

“It was a real sacrifice—and it made us happier than ever before,” said Valentina years later in an interview. This week’s narrative will highlight the importance of the God-first principle. When adopted, it will lead us to imitate Jesus, considering others’ well-being before our own. By thus becoming God’s representatives, we are assured that all our needs will be provided by Him.*

*Adapted from a text of Andrew McChesney, https://www.adventistmission.org/%E2%80%8Bwhen-pastors-wife-gave-away-a-half-loaf-of-bread.
Write out 1 Kings 17:8–16 from the translation of your choice. If you’re pressed for time, write out 1 Kings 17:13, 14. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, or outline or mind-map it.
Ingest

Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

Circle repeated words/ phrases/ideas

Underline words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you

Draw Arrows to connect words/ phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?

Memorize your favorite verse in 1 Kings 17:8–16. Write it out multiple times to help with memorization.

Is God still able to tell us the very place where we should go, the kind of work that we should look for, or a field of study that we should pursue? How can we discern His will?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/stw09-3
What questions emerge after studying this passage? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

Why did the Zarephath widow give first to the prophet? What, do you believe, was her motivation?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/stw09-4

The Phoenician Widow: The Trusting Giver
What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

Deuteronomy 11:10–17
Deuteronomy 28:15, 23, 24
Revelation 3:19
2 Chronicles 7:13, 14
Matthew 6:33
Hebrews 13:2
Isaiah 58:10, 11
Matthew 10:40–42

What other verses come to mind in connection with 1 Kings 17:8–16?

Review your memorized verse from 1 Kings 17:8–16.
Where do you see Jesus in 1 Kings 17:8–16?

What is preventing you from putting communion with Jesus “first” in your daily schedule?

What is He saying to you through these texts?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

Prayer: How do you respond to seeing Jesus in this way?
Review the memory verse.
How does it apply to your life this week?

After this week’s study, what needs to change in your devotional life?

How can you use your influence to enact change in spheres around you?

Read more inSight from the Spirit of Prophecy at www.inversebible.org/stw09-7
Share insights from this week’s memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.

How do you explain that a God of love, who claims to respect free choice, chastises those who leave His ways (Rev. 3:19)? How can this be true love?

What is the devil’s intention in leading people to believe that as a God of love that He never chastises and neither blesses in a special way those who are faithful?

As courage is a virtue that depends on fear to exist, how would you define courage?

What can you do the night before to make it easier to put God first every morning? What are your plans for your devotional time?

What measures would you suggest to a friend that asks you how to put God first in their financial life? What should someone do to be able to return tithe and regular offerings before any expenses are met?

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