

## Naaman needed God

Lesson 03 in the series, "Countercultural"

### I. Naaman was a war hero from a hostile culture who desperately needed God.

The king of Aram had great admiration for Naaman, the commander of his army, because through him the LORD had given Aram great victories. But though Naaman was a mighty warrior, he suffered from leprosy. At this time Aramean raiders had invaded the land of Israel, and among their captives was a young girl who had been given to Naaman's wife as a maid. One day the girl said to her mistress, "I wish my master would go to see the prophet in Samaria. He would heal him of his leprosy." So Naaman told the king what the young girl from Israel had said. "Go and visit the prophet," the king of Aram told him. "I will send a letter of introduction for you to take to the king of Israel." So Naaman started out, carrying as gifts 750 pounds of silver, 150 pounds of gold, and ten sets of clothing. The letter to the king of Israel said: "With this letter I present my servant Naaman. I want you to heal him of his leprosy." When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes in dismay and said, "This man sends me a leper to heal! Am I God, that I can give life and take it away? I can see that he's just trying to pick a fight with me." 2 Kings 5:1-7 (NLT)

a. God loves to use ordinary people.

*Note:* God used a servant girl to point a decorated war hero to himself.

"But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things--and the things that are not--to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him." 1 Corinthians 1:27-29 (NIV)

b. We must pray for opportunities to point people to God wherever we are.

"Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart. Pray for us, too, that God will give us many opportunities to speak about his mysterious plan concerning Christ. That is why I am here in chains. Pray that I will proclaim this message as clearly as I should. Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone." Colossians 4:2-6 (NLT)

### II. Naaman, was outraged when Elisha, the man of God treated him like an ordinary person.

"But when Elisha, the man of God, heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes in dismay, he sent this message to him: "Why are you so upset? Send Naaman to me, and he will learn that there is a true prophet here in Israel." So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and waited at the door of Elisha's house. But Elisha sent a messenger out to him with this message: "Go and wash yourself seven times in the Jordan River. Then your skin will be restored, and you will be healed of your leprosy." But Naaman became angry and stalked away. "I thought he would certainly come out to meet me!" he said. "I expected him to wave his hand over the leprosy and call on the name of the LORD his God and heal me! Aren't the rivers of Damascus, the Abana and the Pharpar, better than any of the rivers of Israel? Why shouldn't I wash in them and be healed?" So Naaman turned and went away in a rage. But his officers tried to reason with him and said, "Sir, if the prophet had told you to do something very difficult, wouldn't you have done it? So you should certainly obey him when he says simply, 'Go and wash and be cured!' So Naaman went down to the Jordan River and dipped himself seven times, as the man of God had instructed him. And his skin became as healthy as the skin of a young child's, and he was healed!" 2 Kings 5:8-14 (NLT)

a. We must humble ourselves before God.

"Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall." Proverbs 16:18 (NIV)

"And all of you, serve each other in humility, for 'God opposes the proud but favors the humble.' So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor."

1 Peter 5:5-6 (NLT)

b. We can't earn God's grace.

"God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it."

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NLT)

### III. Naaman, returned to his polytheistic culture committed to worshipping God alone.

Then Naaman and his entire party went back to find the man of God. They stood before him, and Naaman said, "Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. So please accept a gift from your servant." But Elisha replied, "As surely as the LORD lives, whom I serve, I will not accept any gifts." And though Naaman urged him to take the gift, Elisha refused. Then Naaman said, "All right, but please allow me to load two of my mules with earth from this place, and I will take it back home with me. From now on I will never again offer burnt offerings or sacrifices to any other god except the LORD. However, may the LORD pardon me in this one thing: When my master the king goes into the temple of the god Rimmon to worship there and leans on my arm, may the LORD pardon me when I bow, too." "Go in peace," Elisha said. So Naaman started home again. 2 Kings 5:14-19 (NLT)

a. We can't buy God's grace.

"Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money and said, 'Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.' Peter answered: 'May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God.'" Acts 8:17-21 (NIV)

b. God must have first place in our lives.

"But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander." 1 Peter 3:15-16 (NIV)

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## Connect Group Questions

1. What is the worst injury or illness you've ever experienced? What happened? What treatment did you receive? How long did it take to recover?
2. Read the story of Naaman in 2 Kings 5:1-19. What was Naaman's need? Why was he so angry about taking a dip in the Jordan River? What would you have done in his place?
3. What made you realize that you needed God in your life? Who helped you get right with God? How did they do it? How did you respond?
4. Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-29. Why does God like to use ordinary people to accomplish his purposes? Why do many of us want to leave ministry in the hands of professionals?
5. Read Ephesians 2:8-9 & 1 Peter 3:15-16. Christians often say, "Jesus is my Lord and Savior." What does this mean? Are the terms "Lord" and "Savior" both necessary? Why? Why not?
6. Describe one person you know who desperately needs God. Now read Colossians 4:2-6. Spend some time as a group praying for the people you have discussed asking God to give you opportunities to reach out to them, boldness, the right words to say.
7. Discuss the following quotations:

"Never allow the thought, 'I am of no use where I am' because you certainly can be of no use where you are not. Wherever God has dumped you down in circumstances pray..." Oswald Chambers

"If we exalt money, status, or sex above the Word of God, we are living in idolatry. Every time we inwardly submit to the strongholds of fear, bitterness, and pride, we are bowing to the rulers of darkness. Each of these idols must be smashed, splintered, and obliterated from the landscape of our hearts." Francis Frangipane

"A person wrapped up in himself makes a small package." Harry Emerson Fosdick

"Grace, like water, flows to the lowest part." Philip Yancey

"Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found; was blind, but now I see." John Newton