

"Overcoming Worry and Fear"

Part 5 - "Wrong Thinking and It's Results"

In our last lesson we learned the way the Lord teaches us to think. In fact, Philippians 4:8 uses the term "think on these things." We also mentioned other places in the Bible that refer to the way that we think and/or should not think. In this part of our lesson, we have an example of wrong thinking and what it led to. As we learn we can see for ourselves what might be at stake when we refuse to allow God to help us to think like He would have us think. We will also see how wrong thinking can sometimes cause us to jump to conclusions and miss the blessings of God.

2 Kings 5:1-14 - Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper. 2 And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife. 3 And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy. 4 And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel. 5 And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment. 6 And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy. 7 And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me. 8 And it was so, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. 9 So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. 10 And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. 11 But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. 12 Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. 13 And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? 14 Then went he down, and dipped himself

seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

1. Vs. 1 - Greatness and weakness. Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, *but he was a leper.*

There never has and there never will be a great man without weakness. David was weak in the flesh that led to adultery, Abraham thought it best to lie about Sarah, Samson gave in to the persistent wining of Delilah, Peter was outspoken and unfaithful, Thomas doubted and Paul said the things that he wanted to do he didn't do and the things that he should not do he found himself doing.

The truth is, when we get honest with ourselves and come to terms with our weaknesses, we are then able to do something about them. It is important for us to understand that we are talking about the weaknesses in our lives that we can do something about. God's objective for some of our weaknesses may simply be to keep us humble and dependent upon Him. In **2 Cor. 12:2-10** Paul describes an experience that he had that he could not even put into words. He went on to say that in order that he would not "**exalt himself above measure**" there was given him a thorn in the flesh that he asked the Lord three times to take away and the Lord's response was, "**My grace is sufficient for you.**"

Right thinking helps us to embrace our limitations and not be defeated by them. We can learn from this story and Paul's story as well that great people can still be honorable despite their weaknesses. Naaman did a great service to his country, and he did a great service for his Master, but still, he was a leper.

2. Vs. 5-8 - A message and its place. And the king of Syria said, *Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment. 6 And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy. 7 And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes (this was a custom of the Jews when they heard or read something they considered blasphemous), and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me. 8 And it was so, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of*

Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.

How amazing that God would get the news to the exact person that had the solution to Naaman's problem.

Jeremiah 31:3 - The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

John 6:44 - No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

- God will make a way to reveal His ways when we are eager to know them. In fact, He will make a way when we are not eager to know them as well. **(Paul, Acts 9)**

Never take for granted the times that God has gotten His word to us. God's goodness is still revealed in our badness and in spite of our badness. Many of us remember times when we were out of God's will and yet He still made a way to make us aware of our opportunity to return to Him. Our experience will begin to and continue to change as we submit to God's word. Despite the arrogance of Naaman we still see the goodness of God.

3. Vs. 9-12 - Instruction and assumption. So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. 10 And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. 11 But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. 12 Are not Abana and Pharpar (the golden stream), rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.

Naaman's mistake....**"I thought"**

It is not enough to assume that we know and understand all the ways of God. Many times, in the life of the Christian we are pressed in our faith. There will be times when God does something a different way than we would have liked Him to. During these times it is important for us to understand that when God is doing something a different way than we may have **thought**, His way is still the right way. He is trying to get us to **think** and act in a different way. If He is

supposed to do everything our way than how did we end up in the circumstances that we have brought upon ourselves if we really know what we are doing?

Naaman said, "I thought...he will come out a different way, call a different way, do a different thing, in a different place".

Verse 8 calls Elisha "**the man of God**". In those days, a prophet of God spoke on behalf of God. Today we have the complete word of God and a man with the spiritual gift of prophecy speaks God's written word, not some other revelation outside of the word of God. Naaman would not submit to the word of God by the prophet of God because the plan was not to his liking and therefore had he dug himself in and resisted; he thought a cure would not satisfy him unless he be cured with ceremony. Had he stayed dug in he would have left worse off than he was before he arrived; and so, it is for us.

But notice also that he thought he could do a different thing. "**May I not wash in them, and be clean?**" It is the universal rule of the human family, in every place and at every time, that man wants to do some extraordinary thing by which he might think he can restore himself to the favor of God.

Proverbs 3:5,6 - Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Proverbs 14:16 - A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident.

Proverbs 26:12 - Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.

Isaiah 55:8,9 - For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

If we want help from God, we must do things God's way. There will be times where we may fail to see God's best for us because we have already made up our minds as to which way God is supposed to execute His plan and if His plan is not our plan than we are tempted to not follow it all together. We will always have enough to do to obey what the Lord says without setting ourselves up to be the managers of His providence. Let Him plan, let Him work, let Him order, let us trust and let us submit. Right thinking says, "I do not have to have everything figured out to follow God."

4. Vs. 13,14 - The servants advice and Naaman's submission. And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? 14 Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

Naaman obviously took the long way for his healing. I am certain that after this miraculous healing, the testimony of Naaman was much like the testimony of so many others. "Why did I not listen to the Lord the first time that He told me what to do or not to do? How could I have thought that I knew more than He does about the challenges in my life and the answers for those challenges?" All of us have stories like this but we would all agree that we do not need any more of these stories for God to prove His point. When we submit to the will of God by the word of God, we will always be better off for doing so. We need not think again that our ways are better than God's ways lest He prove us wrong all over again.