

Namaan and the Dirty River

2 Kings 5:1-16; *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 244-250

Touch your elbows. Then lightly rub your index fingers together. Which could you feel more? There are lots more nerves in your fingers than on your elbows. God gave us special nerves to help us know when we touch something hot, cold, hard, soft, or painful. People who have leprosy lose the ability to feel those things. Here's what happened to one man who had leprosy.

Namaan was the commander of the army of Aram

(Syria). He was famous for winning battles. And he was a close friend of the king.

One day this warrior got very sick. His skin began to dry up. It turned white and began to fall off. And he was losing some of his ability to feel things. Naaman had leprosy, a disease no doctor could cure.

A young Israelite girl worked for Naaman's wife. She was a captive from one of Aram's raids against Israel. The girl now lived far away from home, among Israel's enemies. But she had not forgotten the great things God had done for Israel.

"Why doesn't your husband go ask the prophet in Israel to heal him?" she asked Naaman's wife. "Elisha could ask God to cure the leprosy."

Naaman had seen every doctor in Aram. He had tried every medicine. Nothing had worked. Elisha was his last hope.

Naaman led several companies of Aramean soldiers to Israel. Wagons followed, loaded with treasure to pay for a miracle cure. What a strange sight that must have been!

But Elisha didn't give Naaman any medicine. He didn't burn incense or whisper secret spells. He sent his servant to tell Naaman to go take a bath—not just anywhere, but in the Jordan River which flowed nearby.

Naaman was frustrated. Elisha hadn't even talked to him! He had expected Elisha to ask the God of Israel to do something big. But all he had been told was to take a bath in a dirty river! Not



The Message

God's grace is for everyone.

Memory Verse

“From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another”

(John 1:16, NIV).

once! Seven times!! He was ready to go home. If he had to take a bath, he would do it at home. The rivers near his home ran fast and clear. The Jordan was a muddy stream not much wider than a camel path!

Fortunately, one of Naaman's servants stopped him. “If Elisha had asked you to do something big, would you have done it?” he asked.

Of course I would, Naaman thought. He had conquered entire countries. There was no big thing he couldn't do—except heal himself.

The servant continued. “Then what is so hard about doing such a little thing?”

Naaman thought about it, then made up his mind. He would do what God's prophet said.

He went to the Jordan River. Six times he lowered

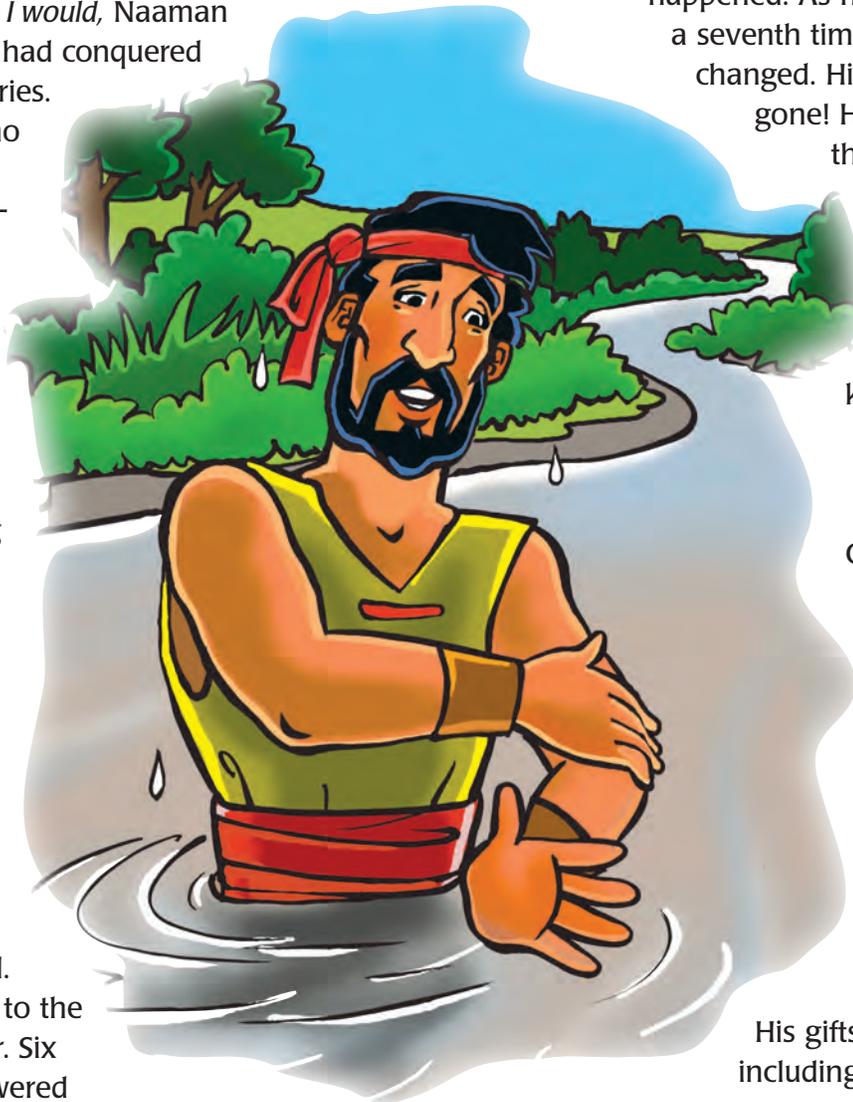
himself into the water. Nothing happened. As he rose from the water a seventh time, something had changed. His pale, dry skin was gone! He was covered with the soft, healthy skin of a young man!

Not only was he changed outside, Naaman had also changed inside. “I know that the God of Israel is the only true God,” he said.

Only the love of God could make a captive servant girl be kind to her captors.

Only the power of God could work miracles through the prophet Elisha. And only God's grace could heal a foreign warrior of his sin and his sickness.

God wants to give His gifts of grace to everyone, including you.



S A B B A T H

DO Go on a nature walk with your family. Collect things such as leaves, seeds, burrs, grasses, flowers, acorns, nuts, pine cones, and twigs. Sort the things by making piles of similar objects (all the acorns together, all the seeds together, etc.). Do they feel the same? Read your Bible lesson. Then thank God for your sense of touch.

During this time, Syria and Israel often fought each other.



T U E S D A Y

READ With your family, read 2 Kings 5:7-12. What are some healing methods used today? Write "Ways to Stay Healthy" at the top of a paper. Draw examples on the paper.

DO Say your memory verse without help. Then sing "Seek Ye First" (Sing for Joy, No. 67) before prayer. Thank God for His healing power.

S U N D A Y

READ With an adult, make an ink spot on a scrap of cloth. Spray the spot with hair spray. What happens? Naaman would have been happy if he could have removed his spots with hair spray. Why did he have spots? Read 2 Kings 5:1.*

DO Write your memory verse on paper and decorate it with pictures of blessings God has given you. Thank God for those blessings.

*Adapted from Kathie Reimer, 1001 Ways to Help Your Child Walk With God (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1994), p. 77.

M O N D A Y

READ During family worship read and discuss 2 Kings 5:2-6.

DO Deliver the verse you made for someone in Sabbath School. Or make a card for someone using their name with a Bible verse such as Romans 1:7: "Grace and peace to [name] from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ" (NIV). Tell the person that God's grace is for everyone—including them.

PRAY Pray for someone who is sick.

W E D N E S D A Y

SHARE Read 2 Kings 5:13-16 with your family. Why did God heal Naaman?

DO Think of a time that you didn't like God's instructions. Ask for His forgiveness in a silent prayer and thank Him for loving you anyway. Ask Him to help you to do His will.

DO Make a bookmark. Find and write Psalm 40:8 on one side. Write Philippians 4:13 on the other. His strength is another gift of grace. Ask God for strength to do His will.

T H U R S D A Y

DO The Bible tells about other lepers. Can you unscramble their names?

Numbers 12:10 mairim _____

Exodus 4:6 soems _____

Matthew 26:6 isnom _____

Luke 17:12 net sreple _____

DO Say your memory verse, then sing "Redeemed!" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 68) before prayer. Thank God for good health.

F R I D A Y

DO For sundown worship, hang a sheet between two chairs. Imagine that the River Jordan is behind it. Act out the story of Naaman. How many times will you have to dip in the "water"?

READ Read Psalm 98, taking turns reading the verses. Ask each person to tell about a "marvelous thing" God has done for them.

DO Say your memory verse together. Sing "All Praise to Thee" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 19) before prayer.

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PUZZLE

Directions: It took a lot of faith for Naaman to bathe in the Jordan River. Sort out the words to discover what Naaman learned.

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