CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
APRIL27 2024

Scripture Story: 2 Kings 5.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapters 20; 21.

test of faith



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keytext

"Naaman's servants went to him and said, 'My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it?' . . . So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy."

(2 Kings 5:13, 14, NIV)

flashlight

"The proud spirit of Naaman rebelled against following the course outlined by Elisha. The rivers mentioned by the Syrian captain were beautified by surrounding groves, and many flocked to the banks of these pleasant streams to worship their idol gods. It would have cost Naaman no great humiliation of soul to descend into one of those streams. But it was only through following the specific directions of the prophet that he could find healing. Willing obedience alone would bring the desired result" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 249).

what do you think?

Which of the following individuals do you think are prideful? Explain your answers.

___ José ignores his friends whenever a cute girl walks by.
___ Katelyn is constantly showing off her latest high-tech gadget.
___ Your band teacher doesn't listen to feedback from his students.
___ Reagan ignores advice from his parents and friends about not smoking.
___ Sarah shares her straight-A report card on her social media page.
___ Lindsey complains whenever she falls short of her goal of perfection.

Questions to consider:

1. How would you describe someone suffering from the disease of pride?
2. What are the symptoms of this disease?
3. How can the disease of pride be cured?

INTO THE STORY

"Now Naaman was com-mander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded, because through him the LORD had given victory to Aram. He was a valiant soldier, but he had leprosy.

"Now bands of raiders from Aram had gone out and had taken captive a young girl from Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. She said to her mistress, 'If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy.'. . .

"So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door of Elisha's house. Elisha sent a messenger to say to him, 'Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed.'

"But Naaman went away angry and said, 'I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy. . . .' So he turned and went off in a rage.

"Naaman's servants went to him and said, 'My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, "Wash and be cleansed"!' So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy.

"Then Naaman and all his attendants went back to the man of God. He stood before him and said, 'Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. So please accept a gift from your servant.'

"The prophet answered, '. . . I will not accept a thing.' . . .

"So Gehazi hurried after Naaman. When Naaman saw him running toward him, he got down from the chariot to meet him. 'Is everything all right?' he asked.

" 'Everything is all right,' Gehazi answered. 'My master sent me to say, "Two young men from the company of the prophets have just come to me from the hill country of Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and two sets of clothing."' . . .

"When he went in and stood before his master, Elisha asked him, 'Where have you been, Gehazi?'

" 'Your servant didn't go anywhere,' Gehazi answered.

"But Elisha said to him, '. . . Naaman's leprosy

did you know?

The pride of sin is listed in Proverbs 6:16-19 and in Mark 7:21-23. Like all sins, pride begins in the heart. Ellen G. White in *Steps to Christ,* says that "pride, selfishness, and covetousness . . . are sins that are especially offensive to God; for they are contrary to the benevolence of His character, to that unselfish love which is the very atmosphere of the unfallen universe" (p. 30).

will cling to you and to your descendants forever.' Then Gehazi went from Elisha's presence and his skin was leprous—it had become as white as snow."

(2 Kings 5:1-3, 9-16, 21-27, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Read the story to note details that are new to you.

Circle the different people in the story.

What character qualities do you see in:
Naaman's servant girl? _____
Naaman? _____
Elisha? _____
Naaman's servants? _____
Gehazi? _____

If this story were to be made into a motion picture, what title would you give it? _____

What similarities do you see between the following Bible characters and contemporary public figures?
Naaman's servant girl—Hillary Clinton, former secretary of state to U.S. president Barack Obama _____
_____
Naaman—Rush Limbaugh _____
_____
Elisha—Billy Graham _____
_____
Naaman's servants—Cabinet members for the president of a country _____
_____
Gehazi—Martha Stewart _____
_____

What other contemporary counterparts might compare today to the Bible characters?

_____
_____
_____
_____

punch lines

"If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, for each one should carry their own load" **(Galatians 6:3-5, NIV).**

"Though the LORD is exalted, he looks kindly on the lowly; though lofty, he sees them from afar" **(Psalm 138:6, NIV).**

"For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you" **(Romans 12:3, NIV).**

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

further insight

"Men may think to hide their evil deeds from human eyes, but they cannot deceive God. . . .

"Truth is of God; deception in all its myriad forms is of Satan, and whoever in any way departs from the straight line of truth is betraying himself into the power of the wicked one."—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 252

Sabbath

Read Psalm 138:6.

Discuss the people in the *What Do You Think?* section. Rank them from the most prideful to the most humble. Explain your reasoning behind your ranking.

Sunday

Read 2 Kings 5:4-7.

Tell the story of Naaman from the following perspectives:

- The perspective of the captive girl.

_____
_____
_____

- The perspective of Naaman's guardian angel.

_____
_____
_____

- The perspective of the king of Israel:

_____
_____
_____

Monday

Read Colossians 2:13, 14.

In what area of your life do you long to be "washed and cleansed"? Write a letter to God confessing this struggle in your life. Burn or shred the letter to remind yourself of God's perfect and complete forgiveness. (If you would like some resources about issues with which you are struggling, go to http://livingiths.org/resources/at-risk-help/risk-behaviors).

Tuesday

Read Proverbs 16:18.

Read the *Flashlight* section. Compare it to the following quotation from Ellen White in *The Acts of the Apostles*, page 416:

"Few realize the full meaning of the words that Christ spoke when, in the synagogue at Nazareth, He announced Himself as the Anointed One. He declared His mission to comfort, bless, and save the sorrowing and the sinful; and then, seeing that pride and unbelief controlled the hearts of His hearers, He reminded them that in time past God had turned away from His chosen people because of their unbelief and rebellion, and had manifested Himself to those in heathen lands who had not rejected the light of heaven. The widow of Sarepta and Naaman the Syrian had lived up to all the light they had; hence they were accounted more righteous than God's chosen people who had backslidden from Him and had sacrificed principle to convenience and worldly honor."

Wednesday

Read Romans 12:3.

What is your impression of conceited people? Check the answers that apply.

I think they're usually . . .

____ jealous of their friends.
____ deceiving themselves.
____ admired by others.
____ in need of being humbled.
____ very popular with the opposite sex.
____ glued to the mirror.
____ extremely confident in themselves.
____ secretly admired.
____ hard to get to know.
____ good listeners.
____ insecure.

What do arrogance and self-debasement have in common?

_____
_____
_____

Thursday

Read Galatians 6:3-5.

What are the steps God is asking me to take in my life to grow in humility?

_____
_____
_____

What do I need to do to make this a reality in my life?

_____
_____
_____

Friday

Read Galatians 4:4, 5.

Reflect on this quote from *The Youth's Instructor*: "The more we think about Christ's becoming a babe here on earth, the more wonderful it appears. How can it be that the helpless babe in Bethlehem's manger is still the divine Son of God? Though we cannot understand it, we can believe that he who made the worlds, for our sakes became a helpless babe. Though higher than any of the angels, though as great as the Father on the throne of heaven, he became one with us. In him God and man became one, and it is in this fact that we find the hope of our fallen race. Looking upon Christ in the flesh, we look upon God in humanity, and see in him the brightness of divine glory, the express image of God the Father" (Ellen G. White, *The Youth's Instructor*, November 21, 1895, para. 3).

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapters 20; 21.

**Royalty in Ruins* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.