

God Heals
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2 Kings 5:1-14

Let's talk about simple solutions. Let's say I want to lose weight. What are some simple solutions? What are some simple solutions to get into better physical shape? How about learning a musical instrument – what are the simple solutions? The problem is people don't want simple solutions; we want simple SHORT CUTS. "*Can't I buy a pill or a potion?*" "*Play piano in two weeks with no lessons!*" We desire the outcome but we refuse to do what it takes to get there.

Sometimes we refuse to follow the plan because we have our OWN plan. Today's passage is about a miraculous healing. Ever heard of "Cyberchondria?" It's a term for repeated Internet searches regarding medical information resulting in excessive concerns about physical health.¹ Don't you know doctors must hate people Googling their symptoms and telling the doctor what to do? In today's story a prominent Gentile came to God's man for healing but his pride almost got in the way of both his physical and spiritual healing.

Here's the point: God's plan for a relationship with Him involves some really simple steps. I said simple -- I didn't say they are never hard or even unpleasant at times. The problem is we sometimes have our own ideas about how God's plan should work. We look for shortcuts to spiritual healing and eternal life.

Here is a little context: The prophet Elijah was taken to Heaven in a whirlwind as his divinely chosen successor Elisha (SHA) stood watching. (I know it's confusing that their names sound the same!) Elisha's ministry is filled with miracles from God that helped both common people and prominent national leaders. He was humble and obedient and God gave him a "double blessing" to serve Israel.

2 Kings 5:1–14 (NLT) — 1 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. **2** 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. **3** 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." **4** So Naaman told the king what the young girl from Israel had said. **5** "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. **6** 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." **7** When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes in dismay and said, "Am I God, that I can give life and take it away? Why is this man asking

me to heal someone with leprosy? I can see that he's just trying to pick a fight with me." **8** 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." **9** So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and waited at the door of Elisha's house. **10** 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."

- Naaman (*NAY uh muhn, or NAY muhn*) was the number two man in Aram (Syria.) He was held in high esteem by the king but he had a serious skin disease. It may or may not have been leprosy as we know it.
- He was a Gentile enemy of Israel. His wife's Israeli maid was a captive of one of his raids. She had a heart for God and fondness for the Naamans.
- She had heard of Elisha's "wonder-working power" from God and persuaded General Naaman to go to Samaria for a miraculous healing.
- Verse 5: **Why did Naaman take all that silver, gold, and stuff? How is that a picture of how some people approach God for spiritual healing?**
- When the great Naaman arrived at the prophet's door how did Elisha seem to be rude? **We don't really know Elisha's reasons for this, but why do you think he might have acted this way toward this prominent man?**
- I was reminded of another Gentile seeking healing from Jesus in Matthew 15:21-28. Let's turn there. Did Jesus seem a bit rude at first?
- Wiersbe: "[O]ur Lord responded to this woman as He did, not to destroy her faith, but to develop it."ⁱⁱ It could be that Elisha wasn't being rude or dismissive, perhaps he was teaching Naaman that he didn't need a big ceremony to be healed, just simple faith in God's direction. Just go dip!

11 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! **12** 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.

- Elisha gave Naaman the simple solution but Naaman got mad.
- Bill Bright, the founder of Campus Crusade for Christ authored the "Four Spiritual Laws" gospel tracts. Law #1 is, "*God loves you and offers a wonderful plan for your life.*" Naaman wanted to re-write that to read, "*God, I have a wonderful plan for my life, if you love me you will bless it.*"
- The prescription for healing was so simple Elisha just wrote it on a "post-it" note and sent it out to the curb but Naaman was offended. "*You want ME to go dip in that muddy Jordan river? Can't I go to a nice Syrian spa?*"
- **What was Naaman's ATTITUDE PROBLEM preventing his healing?**

- We need to beware of slipping into Naaman Syndrome.
- I summed it up this way (pardon the overdose of alliteration): **Persistent pride plus preconceived plans equals prolonged problems.**
- Naaman was seeking physical healing but this story is also a picture of the spiritual healing we all need from God. **How are unbelievers sometimes like Naaman when they hear the gospel?**
- *“I just turn away from sin, trust in Christ to save me, obey His commands and I’ll live forever in Heaven with Him? It can’t be that simple! It also sounds like I have to let Jesus run my life, and I can’t do THAT! Can’t I just give some silver and gold to the church to get into Heaven?”*
- How about this: *“I’m a very prominent person, I imagined that God would be very lucky to have me in His church. I thought He would come out to the curb to welcome me into His family.”*
- Persistent pride and preconceived plans! It’s not just unbelievers.
- **How can Christ-followers be like Naaman when seeking God’s will?**
- When we read the teachings of Christ, our human nature can’t help but respond: *“You want me to, DO WHAT? Turn the other cheek? Love my enemies? Go the extra mile when I’m being treated unfairly? Deny myself? Forgive people who have harmed me? Do what?”*
- Persistent pride plus preconceived plans equals prolonged problems.
- There IS a happy ending to this story thanks to more caring servants.

13 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!’ ” **14** 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, and he was healed!

- Naaman got past his pride and pretense and God healed his physical problem. Verse 15 might indicate that Naaman received spiritual healing as well when he said, *“Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel.”ⁱⁱⁱ*
- One last point. In the New Testament Jesus referred to this incident in Luke 4:27 when He said, *“And many in Israel had leprosy in the time of the prophet Elisha, but the only one healed was Naaman, a Syrian.”^{iv}*
- The Jews in Jesus’ hometown were offended when he referred to Naaman’s story. He was saying that they needed salvation just like the Gentiles do. The puffed-up, proud citizens of Nazareth believed they were born to be in the Kingdom of God. Surely they wouldn’t have to be saved like a Gentile! They were so mad they tried to throw Jesus off a cliff!
- Persistent pride plus preconceived plans equals prolonged problems.

So, What’s the Takeaway?

- Naaman not only had a skin problem, he had a bigger problem under the skin – a pride problem. He had his own vision of how the God of Israel would heal him and almost missed the healing because of that pride.
- Thankfully, he eventually humbled himself and allowed God to make him clean with the dirty water of the Jordan.
- D.L. Moody said, *“He lost his temper; then he lost his pride; then he lost his leprosy; that is generally the order in which proud rebellious sinners are converted.”*^x
- If we’re not careful, even Christ-followers can fall into “Naaman’s Syndrome” and let our pride and preconceived notions get in the way of obeying God and receiving His blessings in our lives.
- Instead of expecting God to bless “our plans” for solving our problems, let’s be willing to follow His plan even if it seems counterintuitive.
- The simple solution for our problems is to trust and obey our Heavenly Father. It’s not always easy, but it is simple.
- When we seek shortcuts to solutions let’s remember that persistent pride plus preconceived plans equals prolonged problems. Let’s put away our pride and trust our Lord.

ⁱ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29324396/>

ⁱⁱ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 54). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

ⁱⁱⁱ Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (2 Ki 5:15). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

^{iv} Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Lk 4:27). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

^v THE WIERSBE BIBLE COMMENTARY: OLD TESTAMENT © 2007 Warren W. Wiersbe