

He Almost Chose Pride Over Healing

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Naaman, the famous leper in the Old Testament, was the most powerful human being in Syria next to the king. As commander of the army, when he walked through the streets his own people respected him and did whatever he commanded. But Naaman was full of leprosy.

He heard rumors about a mighty prophet in Israel and went there to get healed by Elisha. I am sure he expected an auspicious reception with a lot of gracious words being said to him. But now this strange prophet, who hardly had any riches and was living out in the middle of nowhere, sent out a servant boy to tell Naaman to go dip in the Jordan River seven times.

Naaman got mad and snapped, "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" (2 Kings 5:11, NIV). His anger grows, and he feels he has been treated disrespectfully. "What on earth is this two-bit prophet talking about? In my country we have rivers far better than the Jordan. Why can't I go there and be cleansed! What nonsense is this?"

In his anger, Naaman starts to go back home. Why should he humble himself before this prophet who didn't even have the courtesy to come out and properly greet him? The truth is, to be healed Naaman had to submit to the one God had appointed to help him. He almost chose pride over healing. Then his servants said to him, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it?" (2 Kings 5:13, NIV), and they pleaded with him to submit to what he had been told. Finally Naaman obeyed the instructions of Elisha.

What happened? He was healed, and his flesh was restored to that of a young boy. His pride and his own reasoning, however, had nearly kept him from the miracle he had been hoping for.