

Decision Making

Faithful decision making is an important life skill. It is worth practicing with our Sunday school and CYC kids. Practically every Bible story involves decision making. The people we meet are faced with problems. They have options. They make decisions. Some of their decisions are good and some are bad. And always there are consequences to consider. In this respect, the Bible is a case book of decision making situations to study and learn from.

The story of Naaman turns on a whole series of decisions, any one of which could have been different and changed the outcome. It is also evident that God was in control, because, at times, the human decisions in the story should have left Naaman to die in his leprosy. The story has a lot to teach us about life and salvation.

Naaman The Syrian ... And His Friends 2 Kings 5:1-15 ESV

1 – 2 Kings 5:1-4.

¹ Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master and in high favor, because by him the LORD had given victory to Syria. He was a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper. ² Now the Syrians on one of their raids had carried off a little girl from the land of Israel, and she worked in the service of Naaman's wife. ³ She said to her mistress, "Would that my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy." ⁴ So Naaman went in and told his lord, "Thus and so spoke the girl from the land of Israel."

- Starting in verse 2, identify the chain of decisions that brings Naaman to the king of Syria in v.4. What is each decision and who makes it?
- Which of these decisions does Naaman have control over and which ones does he not?
- How might any of these decisions have been different, bringing about an entirely different outcome for Naaman?

2 – 2 Kings 5:5-6.

⁵ And the king of Syria said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel." So he went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothes. ⁶ And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which read, "When this letter reaches you, know that I have sent to you Naaman my servant, that you may cure him of his leprosy."

- Can we infer why Naaman goes to the king of Syria with the little girl's information? Could he have done something different? What?
- Does a communication breakdown occur? Look at the king of Syria's letter in verse 6. How does the king's message differ from what the little girl told Naaman's wife in verse 3?
- How many people are in the line of communication between the little girl and the king of Syria? What can we learn from this?

3 – 2 Kings 5:7.

⁷ And when the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? Only consider, and see how he is seeking a quarrel with me."

- Is the king of Israel's response understandable? Is it correct? Why?
- Elisha is in town (verse 3). Why doesn't the king of Israel connect the dots and send Naaman to him?
- Is this the end of the line for Naaman? Could it have been? Why wasn't it?

4 – 2 Kings 5:8-9.

⁸ But when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent to the king, saying, "Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come now to me, that he may know that there is a prophet in Israel."⁹ So Naaman came with his horses and chariots and stood at the door of Elisha's house.

- Identify the chain of decisions in these two verses that brings Naaman to Elisha's doorstep.
- Which of these decisions does Naaman have control over and which ones does he not?
- How might any of these decisions have been different, bringing about an entirely different outcome for Naaman?

5 – 2 Kings 5:10-12.

¹⁰ And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean."¹¹ But Naaman was

angry and went away, saying, "Behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call upon the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper. ¹² Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage.

- Look at verse 11. How do Naaman's preconceptions lead him to a nearly fatal decision?
- Where do preconceptions come from?
- How can preconceptions and expectations induce us to make bad decisions? Give some examples.
- Look at verse 12. How does Naaman use personal bias to justify a bad decision?
- Where do biases come from?
- How do we use personal biases to justify decisions that we make? Give some examples.

6 – 2 Kings 5:13-14.

¹³ But his servants came near and said to him, "My father, it is a great word the prophet has spoken to you; will you not do it? Has he actually said to you, 'Wash, and be clean?'" ¹⁴ So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

- What critical decision is made in verse 13? Who makes the decision and what is required to make it?
- What critical decision is made in verse 14? Who makes the decision and what is required to make it?
- How might either of these decisions have been different, bringing about an entirely different outcome for Naaman?
- Does our personal welfare ever depend on the wise advice of someone else? Give examples. What happens if we refuse to see the wisdom in what we are told?

7 – 2 Kings 5:15.

¹⁵ Then he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and he came and stood before him. And he said, "Behold, I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel; so accept now a present from your servant."

- Could Naaman have done something different after he was healed? What?
- How does Naaman define humility for us in verse 15?

Additional Question

- Read Luke 4:27. What does Jesus expect us to learn from Naaman?