

Stephen Nemeth Lectures

***ELISHA, A MAN OF  
THE SPIRIT  
OR  
OIL, THE  
FORGOTTEN  
FACTOR***

**STUDIES 1 - 10**

**STUDENT MANUAL**

# *Elisha, A Man Of The Spirit or Oil, The Forgotten Factor*

## **Student Manual** **Studies 1 - 10**

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*Stephen Nemeth Lectures*

# ***CALLED AND EQUIPPED FOR SERVICE***

## **STUDY 1**

**Scripture Portions: 1 Kings 19:15-21; 2 Kings 2:9-13**

Elisha, Elijah's successor, had assisted him for nine years before God entrusted him with the full responsibility of the task He had committed to him.

In many ways these two men were much alike. Both wrought similar miracles, both lived in a time of apostasy and both were channels of blessing to very needy people.

But there are marked differences in their ministries. Elijah was a stern, lonely, rugged prophet of fire, whereas Elisha was a gentle, winsome prophet of vision.

We are told very little of Elijah's background and preparation for the great ministry to which God called him. But, Elisha is introduced in a very different way. The story of his call contains a special message for those servants of God whom He calls to special service.

### **1 Kings 19:15-21 -**

*Notice the following points - some of which we considered in our study of Elijah, Lecture #8.*

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**ELISHA WAS AN UNLIKELY PERSON FOR GOD TO CALL TO SPECIAL SERVICE.**

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### **1 Kings 19:15-16 -**

tell us who he was and what he was doing when God's call came to him -

### **1 Kings 19:19 -**

Elijah's successor was a ploughman. An unlikely successor? Look up -

Moses -

### **Exodus 3:1 -**

Gideon -

**Judges 6:11 -**

David -

**Psalms 78:70 -**

Amos -

**Amos 7:14 -**

and compare with -

**1 Corinthians 1:26-29 -**

The truth that God's call comes unexpectedly and to unlikely people is illustrated throughout the Bible and in the experience of God's people in every generation.

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**2. ELISHA'S CALL, WHICH CAME TO HIM THROUGH THE INSTRUMENTALITY OF ELIJAH, WAS CLEAR, DEFINITE AND UNMISTAKABLE.**

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God is the Director of all His work. He chooses and commissions men and women for His service, and He does this definitely and clearly.

Compare -

**Matthew 9:38 -**

**Acts 13:1-4 -**

where these men whom God wanted for missionary service were called by name so there could be no mistake about His plan and purpose for them.

Often; however, the call comes indirectly, as in the case of Elisha who received his commission through Elijah.

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3. **ELISHA RECEIVED HIS CALL WHILE HE WAS FAITHFULLY WORKING AT THE PLOUGH.**

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Was he unsettled in his work and longing to get into *full-time service*? We do not know, but we do know he was faithfully doing his present job when he was called.

This should be the attitude of all who are looking to the Lord to guide them into fuller service for Him. If you are praying to Him to lead you into missionary service or pastoral work - let me ask you: Are you doing your present job as unto Him? Are you punctual, conscientious, respectful and co-operative?

You are in God's school, so make the most of this training time.

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4. **ELISHA DID NOT ATTEMPT TO ENTER GOD'S SERVICE UNTIL GOD HAD CALLED HIM.**

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Only when he was absolutely sure of God's call, did he leave his plough and his family and follow Elijah in obedience to the Lord.

What constitutes the call of God to special service?

The NEED is not the Call.

The need for servants of the Lord is very great, but the need alone does not constitute the call.

The OPPORTUNITY is not the Call.

There is plenty of opportunity for serving the Lord, but this alone does not constitute the call.

The ABILITY is not the Call.

We may be qualified spiritually, mentally and physically, but this does not constitute the call.

*a. The INVITATION is not necessarily the Call.*

Some 'Elijah' may approach us, but we must be sure that, in his invitation, it is God's voice speaking to us.

*e. The DESIRE is not the Call.*

We may have a burning desire to serve the Lord, but let us beware lest we move before He has commanded us.

The **Call of God** is that deep, inward conviction, accompanied by peace in the heart and confirmed by the Word of God, that He would have us do a certain work in a certain place.

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## **5. ELISHA WAS CALLED TO A MOST DIFFICULT JOB OF WORK.**

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God's call *always* is to a difficult task.

Compare -

**1 Kings 19:16-17 -**

Could it have been easy for Elisha to slay those who escaped from the sword of Jehu?

Could it have been easy to be Elijah's assistant for nine years? With this incident, read -

**Luke 9:61 -**

and see how appropriate it is.

Once we respond to God's call, we become involved in a spiritual warfare and are special targets for the devil.

**Ephesians 6:12 -**

We, therefore, need two special qualifications: stability and stickability.

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6. ELISHA NOT ONLY RECEIVED GOD'S CALL TO SERVICE BUT ALSO HIS SPECIAL EQUIPMENT FOR SERVICE.

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Elijah's mantle, cast upon Elisha, was the symbol of a holy anointing from the Lord.

Read -

**1 Kings 19:19 -**

and compare with -

**1 Kings 19:16 -**

When God calls to His service, He always equips.

Gideon -

**Judges 6:11-14 -**

Jeremiah -

**Jeremiah 1:3-10 -**

The Lord Jesus Christ -

**Matthew 3:16 -**

The disciples -

**Luke 24:49 -**

**Acts 2:4 -**

and compare with -

**Acts 13:1-4 -**

Notice the promise made to each one of us -

**Acts 1:8 -**

All God's commands are God's enablings.

We see how conscious Elisha was of his need for spiritual enduement in order to accomplish God's purpose through his ministry.

**2 Kings 2:9-13 -**

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## **7. ELISHA RESPONDED TO GOD'S CALL WITH A WHOLEHEARTED SURRENDER.**

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God's call to him was confirmed by the placing of Elijah's mantle upon him.

**1 Kings 19:20-21 -**

These verses tell us how Elisha responded.

How should we respond to the call of God?

1. With a Holy Alacrity.

Compare the first nine words of **verse 20** with -

**Acts 8:29-30 -**

- b. With a Holy Determination.*

Compare **verses 20-21** with -

**Luke 9:61 -**

Do not confuse Elisha with the man to whom our Lord spoke. Elisha went home to say goodbye. He was quite prepared to leave his loved ones, his home and his all to do the Lord's will.

Every servant of the Lord must likewise be willing and ready for anything.

**1 Kings 19:21 -**

We read here of his public farewell and the complete renunciation of the old life, even to the burning of some of his ploughs. This was symbolic of his wholehearted surrender to the Lord.



3. With a Holy Devotion.

Read the great words at the end of -

**1 Kings 19:21 -**

and compare with -

**Luke 5:10-11 -**

Closing thought -

**Isaiah 28:16 -**

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# ***THE CURSING OF THE YOUNG MEN***

## **STUDY 2**

**Scripture Portions: 2 Kings 2:11, 23-25**

**2 Kings 2:11 -**

The verses in -

**2 Kings 2:23-25 -**

are certainly very hard to understand.

**2 Peter 3:16 -**

It is reasonable to expect difficulties when we read God's Word. Can the mind of finite man expect fully to understand records which are the product of the Infinite Mind? Would the Bible be a divine revelation if poor finite minds could fathom it?

To admit that there are problems in the Bible in no way lessens its value. We must remember that *facts* are never altered or discounted by failure on our part to understand them.

As we study this portion of scripture, let us see what lessons God has to teach us.

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## **1. CONSIDER WHO THESE "LITTLE CHILDREN" WERE.**

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Our Authorized Version says that those who mocked Elisha were "little children" which would suggest children of up to ten years old.

The Revised Version gives a marginal reference to read "young lads" which would suggest boys of, say, up to twenty years old. How old were they?

Genesis 44:20 -

Benjamin is described as "a child of his (Jacob's) old age, a little one". But Benjamin was at least twenty at that time.

**b. 1 Samuel 16:11 -**

David is called “the youngest of Jesse’s children”. The Hebrew words for “youngest” and “children” are the two words translated “little children” in -

**2 Kings 2:23 -**

How old was David at this time? We are told in -

**1 Sam. 16:18 -**

which suggests he must have been twenty or thirty years of age.

**3. 1 Kings 3:7 -**

Solomon says of himself “I am but a little child”. Again the same two Hebrew words are used, but Solomon was twenty years old!

It would, therefore, appear that the “little children” who mocked Elisha were between sixteen and thirty years of age. They were of a responsible age and old enough to know what they were doing. This attack on God’s prophet, then, was made by responsible men!

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## **2. NOTICE WHERE THESE OFFENDERS LIVED.**

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They lived in Bethel where there was a golden calf erected by Jeroboam -

**1 Kings 12:28-33 -**

It was a stronghold of idolatry and a center of apostasy. They were representatives of a wicked movement that blasphemed the name of God. Their attack on Elisha was not, therefore, a sudden whim but the expression of a determined attitude.

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### **NOW OBSERVE EXACTLY WHAT THESE OFFENDERS DID.**

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They mocked Elisha, saying -

**2 Kings 2:23 -**

Elisha was God's prophet, whereas these young men were representatives of their false gods. Elisha was the representative of the true God - so the attack against Elisha was an attack against God, just as when Saul persecuted the early Christians, he was really persecuting the Lord Jesus -

**Acts 9:4 -**

But what is the significance of the mocking words?

Elisha had just passed through Bethel on his way to Jericho with Elijah, who was then translated. Now Elisha was returning to Bethel alone. Knowing Elisha to be God's newly-appointed prophet, the young men met him with the words -

**2 Kings 2:23 -**

In the East, "thou bald head" was an expression of abuse - a grave insult.

Why did they say, "Go up....."?

Was it because they knew Elijah had just gone up and, in effect, they were now saying to his successor, "You go up too, where you belong"? If so, surely they were speaking against Elisha in the same way that some ungodly people today speak against the Lord's servants.

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## **4. NOW CONSIDER ELISHA'S ACTION.**

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**2 Kings 2:24 -**

Was he wrong? Did he act hastily?

The proof that it was not wrong is the fact that God endorsed what he did by sending swift and terrible judgment upon these enemies of His Name. This judgment came at the beginning of Elisha's ministry.

Compare with -

**Acts 5:11 -**

which came at the beginning of the apostolic ministry.

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4. SEE HOW GOD'S JUDGMENT FELL UPON THESE MOCKERS.

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**2 Kings 2:24 -**

We are not told that forty-two were killed, though probably some were and many would carry a scar to the end of their days.

But was not this judgment very severe?

**2 Chronicles 36:16 -**

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**6. IN CONCLUSION, NOTICE SOME LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM THIS INCIDENT.**

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1. We must guard against having a distorted, one-sided view of God.

**Mark 16:16 -**

**Romans 6:23 -**

**Romans 11:22 -**

- b. God cannot be defied with impunity, whether by old or young.*

**Proverbs 29:1 -**

**Galatians 6:7-8 -**

*“Instead of apologizing for this record as though we were ashamed of it, it is far better to accept it fully as one of the warnings of scripture that God will not be defied with impunity, and that the judgments in this life whereby He indicated that fact in Old Testament times are a warning to us in our days, when temporal judgments are rarer but eternal judgment remains.” (H. E. Guillebaud).*

3. It is very dangerous to persecute God's people.

**Psalm 105:15 -**

**Zechariah 2:8 -**

- d. Parents must suffer if they neglect or poison their children. These "children" had been trained in idolatry, now they and their parents were suffering in consequence.*

5. Difficult as this subject is, let us remember that the Judge of all the earth always does that which is right.

**Genesis 18:25 -**

This is, indeed, a solemn incident, but before we leave it, let us go down on our knees in God's presence and read -

**2 Thessalonians 1:6-10 -**

How fearful will be the judgment that will fall upon our unbelieving world when the Lord of Glory comes again!

Closing thought -

**2 Peter 3:9-10 -**



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# ***OIL, OR HOW TO BECOME SPIRIT-FILLED***

## **STUDY 3**

**Scripture Portion: 2 Kings 4:1-7**

### **2 Kings 4:1-7 -**

God's plan and provision for every one of His children is that they should be filled with the Holy Spirit.

### **Ephesians 5:18 -**

This should be the normal experience of every child of God. Compare -

### **Acts 2:4 -**

### **Acts 4:8 -**

### **Acts 6:3 -**

### **Acts 9:17 -**

### **Acts 11:23-24 -**

### **Acts 13:9 -**

### **Acts 13:52 -**

The incident recorded in **2 Kings 4:1-7** is both history and parable. It concerns a poor widow whose husband had been a servant of the Lord. She was now destitute and her children were in danger.

In her extremity, she appealed to Elisha and, miraculously, her little reserve of oil was multiplied and made sufficient for all her needs.

This, then, is a story about empty vessels that were filled with oil. And oil in the Bible is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. This incident shows us, therefore, how empty hearts may become Spirit-filled.

How may we become Spirit-filled?

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## **1. WE MUST ADMIT OUR GREAT NEED.**

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How great was the need of this poor woman! She possessed nothing except for one little pot of oil. Then her creditors came and demanded payment and threatened to take away her sons. So, pocketing her pride, she admitted her emptiness and poverty to Elisha.

That was her first step into blessing!

Every believer is in debt in a threefold sense. We can only discharge that debt when we are filled with the Holy Spirit.

We owe obedience to God.

**Luke 17:10 -**

*b. We owe love to our brethren.*

**1 John 3:16 -**

3. We owe the gospel to the lost.

**Romans 1:14 -**

There is only one way to meet our liability and that is by the infilling and the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

In our own strength, we can never obey God, love our fellow-Christians and discharge our obligation to lost souls around us. We can only do it as we are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Do we admit our need?

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## **2. WE MUST RECOGNIZE WHAT WE HAVE.**

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When this widow confessed her need, Elisha said -

**2 Kings 4:2 -**

She replied -

**2 Kings 4:2 -**

If you are a Christian, you can say the same, for the Holy Spirit is resident within you, *as He is resident within every child of God.* The moment you believed, He entered your heart.

**John 14:16-17 -**

**1 Corinthians 6:19 -**

This is not a matter of feeling but of resting upon what the Lord says. We must, therefore, recognize what we have. We possess the “oil”. Note the last eight words of

-

**Romans 5:5 -**

and compare with -

**John 7:37-39 -**

**Romans 8:9-11 -**

**1 Thessalonians 4:8 -**

Every Christian has the Holy Spirit.

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**WE MUST PROVIDE VESSELS THAT ARE EMPTY.**

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**2 Kings 4:3 -**

The Holy Spirit cannot fill our fulness. He waits to fill our emptiness. In other words, before He can fill us, we must make room for Him. Maybe we are full already - full of self, of our own ability, or full of sin.

The Holy Spirit can only fill empty, clean vessels. How can the *loving* Spirit fill an unloving heart? How can the *gracious* Spirit fill a proud heart? How can a *tender* Spirit fill a selfish heart? How can the *truthful* Spirit fill a deceitful heart? How can the *Holy* Spirit fill an unholy heart?

Are we willing to act on -

**2 Corinthians 7:1 -**

If we will make a full confession to the Lord, we will experience -

**1 John 1:7 -**

**1 John 1:9 -**

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## **4. WE MUST EMPLOY THE SHUT DOOR.**

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### **2 Kings 4:4 -**

The woman shut the door on the outside world and got alone with the Lord.

Here is the secret of a Spirit-filled, Spirit-anointed and Spirit-empowered life. The endowment of power always comes as the result of the shut door.

### **Luke 3:21 -**

Notice that Jesus was praying at the time of His anointing with the Holy Spirit.

Compare -

### **Acts 2:1-4 -**

### **Acts 4:31 -**

### **Acts 9:11 -**

### **Acts 9:17 -**

These verses show us that the infilling of the Holy Spirit comes in answer to prayer and in the place of prayer.

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## **5. WE MUST BE ABSOLUTELY OBEDIENT.**

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### **2 Kings 4:5 -**

The woman obeyed Elisha's instructions implicitly. Compare the significant statement in -

### **Acts 5:32 -**

God can only fill to the measure of our obedience. Are we consciously disobeying the Lord?

**Psalm 139:23-24 -**

Compare -

**John 2:5 -**

It is only as we fully open up the channel of obedience that God can give the Holy Spirit's fulness.

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**6. WE MUST TAKE THE STEP OF FAITH.**

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We may admit our need, recognize what we have, provide empty vessels, employ the shut door and be absolutely obedient, but only then are we ready to take the next step - the appropriation of faith.

We must take God at His word and trust Him to do what He wants and waits to do for us.

**Ephesians 5:18 -**

According to -

**1 John 5:14-15 -**

God will hear and answer our prayer if it is in accordance with His will.

Is it His will for us to be filled? Yes! He commands it!

**Ephesians 5:18 -**

Therefore, we may pray in faith, "Lord, fill me with the Holy Spirit" - and know that our prayer is answered!

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**7. WE MUST USE WHAT GOD GIVES.**

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**2 Kings 4:7 -**

The woman did exactly that.

The Holy Spirit's fulness is not for our selfish enjoyment but for daily living and effective, God-glorifying service.

Happy is the child of God who knows what it is to come daily before the Lord and to plead for and appropriate his fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit's grace and power!

Closing thought -

**Luke 11:13 -**

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# ***A PEN-PICTURE OF A MAN OF GOD***

## **STUDY 4**

**Scripture Portion: 2 Kings 4:8-17**

The story of the “great woman” of Shunem is one of the most touching episodes in scripture. We first read of her in -

### **2 Kings 4:8 -**

where we learn that, as Elisha went about his Master’s business, he visited her home. She at once recognized that he was -

### **2 Kings 4:9 -**

not just “a man of God” but “a *holy* man of God”.

Do these words describe us? They should, if we are Christians, for God requires, and has made it possible, that we should live holy lives.

### **1 Thessalonians 4:7 -**

The late Canon Guy King suggests that there are three distinctive characteristics of a man or a woman whom God calls “holy”. A holy man is -

One who *believes* in God.

b. One who *belongs* to God.

3. One who *behaves* like God.

Do we believe and trust in Him, live and act as those who belong to Him, and behave like Him?

We are told several things in -

### **2 Kings 4:9 -**

that will be true of us if we are living holy lives.

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**A HOLY MAN NEVER NEEDS TO WORRY ABOUT THE PROVISION OF HIS DAILY NEEDS.**

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Many of the Lord's people are very anxious about the matter of their provision. But, if we are seeking to live a holy life, we need not be anxious; for, just as God used the woman of Shunem to feed Elisha, He will use someone to feed and to provide for us.

He fed and cared for Elijah at Cherith -

**1 Kings 17:2-7 -**

and at Zarephath -

**1 Kings 17:8-16 -**

He will do similarly for every one of His children in time of need.

**Psalms 34:10 -**

**Matthew 6:31-34 -**

**Philippians 4:19 -**

then read -

**Psalms 37:25 -**

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**A HOLY MAN IS ALWAYS VERY QUICKLY NOTICED.**

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As Elisha passed by, this woman soon recognized the characteristics of a holy man in him. She sensed that there was something *different* about him. Perhaps he gave thanks before a meal. His conversation was different. He was polite, considerate and helpful.

Perhaps she asked herself, "What has he got that I haven't?"

Do our loved ones "perceive" that we are "a holy man of God", or is ours an empty kind of profession?

**2 Timothy 3:5 -**

*O, to reflect His grace, Causing the world to see  
Love that shall flow, Till others may know  
Jesus revealed in me!*

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### **3. A HOLY MAN SOON BECOMES THE TOPIC OF CONVERSATION.**

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When the woman recognized that Elisha was a holy man, she told her husband of him. Other people heard about him as well.

We are all the subject of someone's conversation. But, what do they say about us?

Do they say -

1. "If that's his religion, I don't want it....."?
- b. "He calls himself a Christian, but he's not honest....."?
3. "She's a church goer, but she's thoroughly selfish....."?
- d. "They say they are Christians, but I can't tell the difference....."?
5. "They're just wonderful! You can tell they're real Christians."

**Romans 14:7 -**

We are constantly under the scrutiny of other people. Do they see Christ in us?

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### **6. A HOLY MAN GETS HIS BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY AND IS NEEDED MOST IN THE EVERYDAY SPHERES OF LIFE.**

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Elisha was exercising a mighty ministry, not in the pulpit, but in the home. He was not preaching. He was living a holy life each moment of the day. That, most of all, is what is needed.

If a few thousand more Christians really lived holy lives in their business, school, factory or home, revival would soon come to our land.

Compare the following -

**Ezekiel 36:23 -**

**John 20:25 -**

The great need today is for Christians to be like the One Whose name they bear; for Christian doctors, bankers, workers in industry, housewives.....*simply to live the Christian life!*

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7. A HOLY MAN WILL ALWAYS SEE RESULTS FROM HIS CONSISTENT HOLY LIVING.

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Elisha did! He was invited to stay in the home at Shunem. He was used to bring a wonderful blessing into the life of this childless woman as the result of his presence and prophecy in the name of the Lord. What fruit resulted!

**2 Kings 4:11-17 -**

Older Christians are often very concerned because they do not know of many, or any, who have come to Christ as the result of their labors, but, if we are faithful in serving the Lord, especially in consistent and Christlike living, we need have no fear about the results. Therefore -

**Galatians 6:9 -**

In “that day” -

**2 Timothy 1:12 -**

many who have seen few results from their service will get a great surprise as they hear their Lord say -

**Matthew 25:21 -**

*I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day.  
I'd rather one should walk with me than merely tell the way.*

*The eye's a better pupil and more willing than the ear.  
Fine counsel is confusing, but example's always clear.*

*The best of preachers are the ones who demonstrate their creeds,  
For to see good put into action is what everybody needs.*

*One good man teaches many, men believe what they behold.  
One deed of kindness noticed is worth forty that we are told.*

*Who stands with men of honor learns to hold his honor dear,  
For right living sparks a language which to everyone is clear.*

*Though an able speaker charms me with eloquence, I say,  
I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day.*

If we are faithful in our believing, our belonging and our behaving, our lives also will be fruitful to the glory of God. Read what is written in -

**1 Corinthians 15:58 -**

Closing thought -

**1 Peter 1:14-16 -**

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# ***A PROPHET'S FURNITURE***

## **STUDY 5**

**Scripture Portions: 2 Kings 4:8-10; Luke 10:38-42**

**2 Kings 4:8-10 -**

**Luke 10:38-42 -**

This study is based upon -

**2 Kings 4:10 -**

It might well be entitled, "The well-furnished Christian life".

Some lives are badly and sparsely furnished, just as some houses are, but God's plan is that we should be "furnished throughout"-

**2 Timothy 3:17 -**

There are four essential pieces of furniture that we all need - a bed, a table, a stool, and a candlestick. These were all necessary for the prophet's comfort. Unless we possess what these articles typify, we cannot possibly be well-furnished, successful workers for the Lord.

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THE FIRST ESSENTIAL FOR A WELL-FURNISHED LIFE IS A BED, THE  
SYMBOL OF REST.

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**Matthew 11:28-29 -**

We read here of two kinds of rest: a rest that is a *gift*, and a rest that is a *discovery*.

What kind of rest do we all need?

Rest from the heavy burden of sin.

The only place where we can get this is at the cross of Calvary, where "the blood of Jesus whispers peace within" -

**Colossians 1:20 -**

Do you possess this rest - or is your heart like the troubled sea?

**Isaiah 57:20 -**

Rest from a condemning conscience.

This rest comes when all is well in our relationship with God and with man.

**Acts 24:16 -**

How great to know that, as the Lord looks at us, He is well pleased!

**1 John 3:22 -**

*c. Rest amid the unrest of the world.*

On every hand, men's hearts are filled with fear, anxiety and doubt, but the child of God may have rest and release from these.

Compare -

**Psalm 119:165 -**

**Isaiah 26:3 -**

**Philippians 4:6-7 -**

As you hear of all the terrible things happening in the world, you may experience rest in the midst of the storm.

**Mark 6:50 -**

4. Rest from the subtle strivings of self.

The self-life within us is our deadly enemy, but we may have complete deliverance.

**Romans 7:24-25 -**

This deliverance comes by the reckoning and the rest of faith.

**Romans 6:11 -**



*e. Rest from the responsibility of service.*

There is a difference between *working for God* and *letting Him work through us*. To work for Him involves fatigue and strain, but to let Him work through us means joy and fruitfulness.

The servant of God experiences rest when he realizes that God Himself is the Worker and that his responsibility in the matter is only to *respond* by quiet trust and obedience to His *ability*.

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THE SECOND ESSENTIAL FOR A WELL-FURNISHED LIFE IS A TABLE, THE SYMBOL OF COMMUNION.

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**Daniel 11:32 -**

beautifully expresses God's will for each one of us.

One of the first pictures we get in the book of **Genesis** is that of perfect, unspoiled fellowship.

**Genesis 3:8 -**

But that fellowship was broken by sin. Only in a few cases was it restored and enjoyed. We are told about one such case in -

**Genesis 5:24 -**

**Hebrews 11:5 -**

This holy, happy fellowship with the Lord is His plan for very one of His children. It is an essential element in a well-furnished life.

If a boy says of his father, "I don't have much to do with him if I can help it!", surely that boy is out of fellowship with his father.

Is it like that with us and our heavenly Father? Are we so busy or preoccupied that we spend little time with Him?

What our Lord wants most of all of each one of us is not our *service* but *ourselves*.

**Revelation 3:20 -**

The picture here is of the Saviour and the sinner supping together in holy, happy fellowship and intimate communion.

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**3. THE THIRD ESSENTIAL FOR A WELL-FURNISHED LIFE IS A STOOL, THE SYMBOL OF INSTRUCTION.**

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We can never become the men and women God would have us be unless we know what it is regularly to sit at His feet and receive His instruction.

**Deuteronomy 33:3 -**

**Luke 10:39 -**

One of the most significant names given to our Lord's followers is that of "disciples".

What is a disciple?

A disciple is a disciplined Christian - one who has come to the Lord Jesus, has found rest, has taken His yoke upon him, and his passion in life is to learn of Him and do His will.

**Matthew 11:28-30 -**

All this involves stern discipline. Some Christians are not disciplined. They are not really "disciples", for they are careless, self-willed and untaught. Others are well-furnished. They are disciplined and controlled, and they are all the happier for it. Children are much happier when they are kindly disciplined.

Do we really know what it is to sit at Jesus' feet and to learn of Him?

**Luke 10:39 -**

to meditate upon His Word?

**Psalm 1:2 -**

to study His Word?

**2 Timothy 2:15 -**

to obey His Word?

**2 Corinthians 10:5 -**

to submit to His control?

**Romans 6:13 -**

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8. THE FOURTH ESSENTIAL FOR A WELL-FURNISHED LIFE IS A CANDLESTICK, THE SYMBOL OF TESTIMONY.

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A candlestick speaks of a life that shines forth.

The Lord Jesus made two very important, related statements:

1. John 8:12 - .....*I am the light of the world*:.....
2. Matthew 5:14 - *Ye are the light of the world*.....

The Lord wants to shine through us.

**Matthew 5:14-16 -**

These verses tell us that He wants us to shine in the home, in business, and in the world.

Our whole duty, so far as our testimony is concerned, is just to let the Lord Jesus Himself shine out through us in our actions and in our words.

When, because of our surrender to Him, He is able to do this, He makes us as lights shining in dark places.

**Philippians 2:14-16 -**

*In conclusion, notice that these four essentials for a well-furnished life, have to do with our relationship with the Lord Himself.*

- (1) **REST** is found **IN** Christ.
- (2) **COMMUNION** is enjoyed **WITH** Christ.
- (3) **INSTRUCTION** is received **FROM** Christ.
- (4) **TESTIMONY** is given **FOR** Christ.

Notice also that, not only are these the four essentials of a well-furnished life, but their order is significant: *rest* must come first, followed by *communion, instruction and testimony!*

***NOTES***

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# ***THE RAISING OF THE SHUNAMMITE'S SON***

## **STUDY 6**

**Scripture Portion: 2 Kings 4:18-37**

This study will be of particular interest to parents and to all who have the responsibility of children. It is based upon the incident recorded in **2 Kings 4:18-37**.

The key words around which the whole story revolves are in -

**2 Kings 4:26 -**

The child has the central place in the story.

Compare this with -

**Matthew 18:2 -**

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### **THE CONDITION OF THE CHILD.**

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What is the spiritual condition of every boy and girl?

It is important that we should be clear about this. The answer is emphatically stated in

-

**2 Kings 4:20 -**

**2 Kings 4:32 -**

In **2 Kings 4:31 -**

Gehazi speaks as though the child might just be sleeping. But the scriptures declare that the child was dead. And that is the spiritual condition of every boy and girl who is not a Christian.

This does not mean that our children are, of necessity, morally bad. It means that they are spiritually dead.

Compare -

**Romans 5:12 -**

**1 John 5:11-12 -**

We are *all* born in sin -

**Psalm 51:5 -**

We are *all* dead in sin -

**Ephesians 2:1 -**

until we receive new life through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

**John 3:36 -**

In **Matthew 18:1-11**, our Lord, in speaking of children -

**Matthew 18:5 -**

whom He describes as “little ones” -

**Matthew 18:6 -**

goes on to say that they are “lost” -

**Matthew 18:11 -**

How would you feel if you knew your child was lost or dead in a physical sense?

Notice how this mother of Shunem felt.

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## **2. THE CONCERN OF THE MOTHER.**

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Quite naturally, when this tragedy fell upon her, this mother was moved to action -

**2 Kings 4:19-24 -**

This raises the question: What should be our first concern for our children? Should it be for their physical welfare, their education, their career.....or should our first concern be for their spiritual welfare?

This mother knew her child was dead. She was filled with a deep concern that he should be raised to newness of life.

That, surely, should be our attitude towards our boys and girls. It is here that the Sunday School teacher has a special ministry, because many parents do not have any concern for the spiritual welfare of their children.

What a glorious opportunity this gives to the teachers to become spiritual foster parents of such children by leading the little ones to the Lord Jesus Who can give them life and salvation and Who waits to be their Friend! This is the greatest work in all the world.

It is great to win an adult to the Saviour, but far greater to win a child. Think of the potentialities of one child. That boy may prove to be a Billy Graham. That girl may become an Amy Charmichael. That rather clumsy lad may be a Moody or a Carey!

Have you a real concern for the salvation of the boys and girls in your care?

---

### 3. THE FAILURE OF THE SERVANT.

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Gehazi was sent by Elisha to lay the prophet's staff upon the child. When he did this, nothing happened.

#### **2 Kings 4:29-31 -**

What is the lesson here?

It is a warning against becoming formal and professional in our service for God. It would seem that Gehazi went to work without praying or making any special preparation.

It is a great temptation for Sunday School teachers to go to their classes quite unprepared for the important task of teaching the word of truth to the children.

It would seem that Gehazi had no prayer, no preparation, no persistence and no faith. Therefore, nothing happened.

#### **2 Timothy 3:5 -**

His service was a formal matter. But see how different was Elisha's approach to the whole problem.



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## **4. THE TRIUMPH OF THE PROPHET.**

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He began on his knees.

Compare -

**2 Kings 4:32-33 -**

**Matthew 6:6 -**

The man of God must be alone with God before he can communicate the life of God. Before we can minister life to those who are dead in trespasses and sins, we must be in touch with God ourselves.

How glorious if we can say what Hannah said -

**1 Samuel 1:27 -**

Are you praying regularly for the salvation of your children or for someone else's children?

**b. *There was personal contact.***

**2 Kings 4:34 -**

What intimate contact there was of eye, mouth and hands. This suggests that, if we are going to win the children to Christ, we must -

- (1) be able to see things from the child's standpoint.
- (2) be able to speak in the child's language.
- (3) be able to enter into the child's interests.

Each of these is essential if we would establish real contact with those we are seeking to win for the Lord.

3. There was intense desire and effort.

We are told that the prophet -

**2 Kings 4:34 -**

It is true that “with strong great wrestlings souls are won”. This applies to work among children just as much as it does to work among adults. It is always hard work, demanding the sacrifice of time and energy.

It often proves disappointing, but is gloriously worthwhile work and brings great reward to the worker.

***d. There was patience and perseverance.***

**2 Kings 4:35 -**

This miracle did not happen all at once. Elisha had to hold onto God and had to work on in faith.

Maybe we fail because we get impatient and give up just when we should be pressing on believingly and trusting God to give the victory.

*In conclusion, notice the three signs of life for which we are to look as we bring the gospel to the boys and girls in our care.*

**(a) 2 Kings 4:34 -**

There is the sign of *warmth*, and if there is warmth there must be life.

**(b) 2 Kings 4:35 -**

There is the sign of *sneezing*, and this, surely indicates more life still.

**(c) 2 Kings 4:35 -**

there is the sign of *vision*, for we are told that the child “opened his eyes”.

Closing thought -

**Proverbs 22:6 -**

***NOTES***

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# ***PHILIPPIANS 4:19 ILLUSTRATED***

## **STUDY 7**

**Scripture Portion: 2 Kings 4:38-44**

### **Philippians 4:19 -**

In Gilgal there was a theological college of which the principal was Elisha, described as “the man of God” in -

### **2 Kings 4:42 -**

There were one hundred students described as “the sons of the prophets”, in -

### **2 Kings 4:38 -**

They were all in danger of starving for **verse 38** tells us “there was a dearth in the land”. Then, quite unexpectedly, a wonderful thing happened.

A man arrived on the scene with a gift of food for Elisha, but, at the Lord’s bidding, Elisha gave instructions for it to be given to the students -

### **2 Kings 4:42 -**

When all were fed, there was still some left over.

### **2 Kings 4:43 -**

Here is an Old Testament anticipation of our Lord’s miracles of the feeding of the 5000

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### **Matthew 14:15-21 -**

and of the 4000 -

### **Matthew 15:32-38 -**

It is a glorious illustration *of the way in which God provides for the needs of His people.*

### **Philippians 4:19 -**

How does He meet their needs?

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**GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS WORD.**

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Notice the words, “thus saith the Lord” and “according to the word of the Lord” -

**2 Kings 4:43-44 -**

Frequently in the Bible, God promises to provide for His children. Not one promise has ever failed or will ever fail.

David testified to God’s promise of provision when he said -

**Psalm 23:1 -**

**Psalm 34:10 -**

**Psalm 37:25 -**

Isaiah gave the same assurance to every believer -

**Isaiah 33:16 -**

Our Lord said the same thing in -

**Matthew 6:25-34 -**

Paul added his testimony -

**Romans 8:32 -**

**2 Corinthians 9:8 -**

These are all God’s promises to us assuring us that He always provides for His children according to His word.

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## **2. GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE IN ANSWER TO PRAYER.**

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Elisha and the college students prayed to God in their extremity, and, because Elisha had prayed, he was able to say -

**2 Kings. 4:43 -**

So, let us notice that, although God promises to supply our needs, He waits for us to pray that He will do so.

Why is this?

One reason is that it is to keep us dependent upon Him. Prayer does not make Him more willing to give, but it provides the channel through which He can give. If we find our supplies running short, it is so that we may feel our need of Him and be cast upon Him.

God always gives to us in answer to prayer - either our own or that of someone else.

This is very much illustrated in the lives of Elijah and Elisha.

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### **3. GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME.**

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Often He allows us to come to the end of our resources before He sends His special provision.

This is wonderfully illustrated in the experience of George Muller and the daily provision that He made for Muller's hundreds of orphans in Bristol - all in answer to prayer. This provision always came just at the right moment - as it did for Elisha and his students!

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### **4. GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE IN A SUITABLE WAY.**

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The students needed food, so the Lord sent food.

George Muller needed food, fuel and clothing for his children, so the Lord supplied these necessities.

What are you needing?

**Luke 11:11-12 -**

Trust Him, for He will never fail!

---

5. GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE FROM AN UNEXPECTED QUARTER.

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**2 Kings 4:42 -**

We are told nothing about him, which reminds us that God does not always provide for us in the way we expect. We are tempted to say, “So-and-so could help”. But the help comes from - “Baal-shalisha”!

Elijah was fed by ravens -

**1 Kings 17:4 -**

Sustained by a widow -

**1 Kings 17:9 -**

which reminds us that God’s resources never run dry. He is never at a loss to know how to supply our need, which is often quite different from what we expect.

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**6. GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE USUALLY THROUGH A HUMAN CHANNEL.**

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The need of the college was supplied through the man from Baal-shalisa. God’s gifts of food and other necessities do not drop from the skies. If we are in need, He sends them through a human channel, through one of His stewards who feels burdened to supply our need in the name of the Lord.

The same is true with regard to spiritual gifts. These are usually dispensed through the preaching of the Word or through the living, consecrated testimony of one of God’s children.

The Lord Jesus fed five thousand, but He did it *through* the disciples.

On the Day of Pentecost, the Lord saved three thousand souls *through* the preaching of Peter and others.

Paul’s needs were constantly met *through* the sacrificial giving of the Christians in the early church.

Do we feel the responsibility placed upon us to be ready to be channels through whom God can give to meet the needs of others?

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6. GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE ON AN ADEQUATE SCALE.

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He always gives abundantly.

**2 Kings 4:43 -**

**2 Kings 4:44 -**

is an illustration of this. There was plenty left over! It was a miracle and He will, if necessary, work a miracle for you.

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## **8. GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE FOR AN UNSELFISH PURPOSE.**

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The “man from Baal-shalisha” gave food to Elisha, but Elisha shared it with his students.

All God’s giving to us should issue in our sharing with others. Notice the words in -

**2 Kings 4:42 -**

and compare them with -

**Matthew 14:16 -**

**1 John 3:17 -**

We are to share with others the gifts that God bestows upon us. This is especially true in relation to spiritual gifts.

For instance: He has saved us - but are we seeking the salvation of others?

He comforts us in our sorrows. Why?

**2 Corinthians 1:4 -**

He lifts our burden, but He says -

**Galatians 6:2 -**

God is no man’s debtor, and, as we give to others, so He goes on giving to us.

Compare -

**Proverbs 11:24 -**

**Luke 6:38 -**



The more we give, the more He gives, and the more He gives, the more He would have us give. What a great Giver He is!

Closing thought -

**Psalm 23:1 -**

***NOTES***

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# ***THE CLEANSING OF NAAMAN***

## **STUDY 8**

**Scripture Portion: 2 Kings 5:1-15**

Of all the incidents connected with Elisha's ministry, the story of the cleansing of Naaman is probably the best known. In fifteen verses we read of his discovery that he was a leper, then a ray of hope, and finally his miraculous healing.

The story appeals to us because it finds a parallel in our own experience. As we read of Naaman, we put ourselves into the picture. Instead of Naaman, it is our name. In the place of leprosy, it is sin.

Instead of the River Jordan, we stand in awe at -

**Luke 23:33 -**

where -

**1 John 1:7 -**

The story divides naturally into five chapters.

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### **NAAMAN WAS A GREAT MAN.**

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Some people live and die without achieving anything of importance, whereas others rise to fame and make a name for themselves. Such was Naaman -

**2 Kings 5:1 -**

Wherever he went, he was acclaimed. He was "a captain.....a great man.....honorable...."

By him the Lord had accomplished much. He was "a mighty man in valour".

A great man indeed, courageous, popular, dependable! But -

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## **2. NAAMAN HAD A GRIEVOUS MALADY.**

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The last five words in -

### **2 Kings 5:1 -**

tell us that, beneath his splendid uniform was the loathsome disease of leprosy. Do you know anyone like that? Success? Yes, but beneath it, tragedy and sorrow.

“A great man.....but he was a leper.” Is that your story? Only God and you know the leprosy, the sin in your heart. It is hidden from others, but God sees it.

### **1 Samuel 16:7 -**

This is a picture of tens of thousands of our fellowmen - decent, moral, kind, but they have sinful hearts. They are unbelievers and are, therefore, spiritually diseased. They never go to worship God.

What chance have they of entering into the kingdom of God?

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## **3. NAAMAN HAD A GENTLE MAID IN HIS HOUSEHOLD.**

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### **2 Kings 5:2-4 -**

This little girl had been captured and carried away from her home and loved ones. In that home, she had learned to trust in the living God. Now, she was not only a believer but a witnessing believer.

When she discovered her master was a leper, she was filled with compassion for him. She felt she must witness to God’s power, ability and willingness to cure Captain Naaman.

The Naamans had entertained an angel unawares -

### **Hebrews 13:2 -**

The wonderful thing is that Naaman was not too proud to listen to the testimony of the little girl!

### **2 Kings 5:5 -**

The king of Syria arranged for Naaman to go to the land of Israel to get the cure he so

much needed.

If only the sin-sick souls would just *try* the Great Physician!

Naaman did this, but notice that -

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#### **4. NAAMAN MADE THREE GRAVE MISTAKES.**

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He was wise in listening to the little girl, but foolish in not following her advice. What were his mistakes?

*First*, he thought he could *Buy* the cure.

##### **2 Kings 5:5 -**

He took with him a very great deal of money. One talent of silver equals 410 pounds sterling. In addition to this, he took 6,000 pieces of gold and ten changes of raiment! What a gift!

But, all the money in the world cannot cure a man of spiritual leprosy.....sin..... -

##### **1 Peter 1:18-19 -**

Many people think they can earn their salvation. But God's Word clearly states that salvation is a gift that has to be received. We can do nothing to procure it.

##### **Romans 3:20 -**

##### **Titus 3:5 -**

#### **b. *Second*, he went to the *Wrong Place* to be cured.**

He went to the king instead of to Elisha.

##### **2 Kings 5:6 -**

Many today are knocking at the wrong door for salvation, for example, at the door of confession to a priest -

**1 Timothy 2:5 -**

at the door of spiritism or some other false cult; at the door of respectability or of church affiliation. There is only one door -

**John 10:9 -**

There is only one place where the leprosy of sin can be dealt with, and that is, at the feet of Jesus -

**Luke 7:37-38 -**

**Luke 7:48-50 -**

3. *Third*, he want to be cured *IN HIS OWN WAY and not in God's way*.

God's way is outlined in -

**2 Kings 5:10 -**

Naaman's reaction when he learned of God's method of cleansing is told in -

**2 Kings 5:11-12 -**

Many people want *their way* and not God's. How different their way is from God's way-

**Isaiah 55:8-9 -**

But look at -

**2 Kings 5:13 -**

God's way is simple and effective. For example -

we are saved by *looking* -

**Isaiah 45:22 -**

by *calling* -

**Romans 10:13 -**

by *coming* -

**Matthew 11:28 -**

by *welcoming* -

**Revelation 3:20 -**

by *entering* -

**John 10:9 -**

by *touching* -

**Matthew 14:36 -**

by *receiving* -

**John 1:12 -**

If you have never done so, will you try it?

Read again -

**2 Kings 5:13 -**

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**5. NAAMAN WAS CURED BY A GLORIOUS MIRACLE.**

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Notice several things that need emphasizing in -

**2 Kings 5:14 -**

4. There was a GREAT HUMBLING.

We read that Naaman “went down”. His pride had to go - and in front of all his officers and servants this mighty man had to go down, down, down.....

Whenever men and women are determined to be saved, they will do anything rather than miss the blessing.

**b. There was PERFECT OBEDIENCE.**

The prophet said -

**2 Kings 5:10 -**

thus, seven times Naaman dipped himself beneath the water. Can you hear the watchers counting, “One.....two.....three.....” as he goes down?

After six dippings Naaman was still a leper. Only when he perfected his obedience by dipping the seventh time did the miracle take place.

When anyone takes God at His word, He always performs the miracle for them.

**Romans 10:9-10 -**

3. There was a COMPLETE CURE.

We are told of this in the last part of -

**2 Kings 5:14 -**

Compare with -

**2 Corinthians 5:17 -**

There is still one very beautiful thing to notice in this story which is more wonderful and more to be desired than physical healing, even than being cleansed from our sin. Read -

**2 Kings. 5:15 -**

Naaman was now absolutely convinced that there was a God in heaven, From now on, he was determined to make this God *his* God, to know Him, to love Him, to serve Him and to make Him known to others!

Closing thought -

**Isaiah 1:18 -**

**Luke 5:31 -**



***NOTES***

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# ***THE RECOVERY OF THE LOST AXE HEAD***

## **STUDY 9**

**Scripture Portion: 2 Kings 6:1-7**

The story of the raising of the lost axe head, recorded in -

**2 Kings 6:1-7 -**

is the story of a miracle of recovery and restoration. Thank God, He is still able to perform such miracles in human lives!

In this incident, *Elisha* typifies the Lord Jesus -

**2 Kings 6:6 -**

the *sons of the prophets* typify Christian workers -

**2 Kings 6:1 -**

and the *axe head* speaks to us of the power, the anointing and the enabling of the Holy Spirit, without Whom all service must be ineffective -

**2 Kings 6:5-6 -**

Here, then, is a message for all who have known the power of God in their service but who have now become ineffective and are out of touch, backsliders -

**2 Timothy 3:5 -**

*There are three main sections in this story.*

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**A PATTERN TO BE APPROVED.**

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**2 Kings 6:1-4 -**

Here is a pattern of wholehearted service, a picture of what Christian service and servants should be.

Notice the following characteristics -

They were “sons of the prophets” and disciples of Elisha.

**2 Kings 6:1 -**

The first qualification for all Christian service is relationship with the Master.

They dwelt with Elisha.

**2 Kings 6:1 -**

Here is the idea of fellowship and communion which is essential for effective service.

Compare -

**John 15:4 -**

*c. They were burdened about the need for service.*

**2 Kings 6:2 -**

They recognized the need and were anxious to get on with the work.

4. They were commissioned men.

The prophet said to them -

**2 Kings 6:2 -**

Compare with -

**Matthew 28:19 -**

*e. They realized their dependence upon their master.*

**2 Kings 6:3 -**

They were unprepared to undertake the task without him.

Compare with -

**John 15:5 -**

6. They all took a share.

## **2 Kings 6:2 -**

Every man joined in the task.

7. They were energetic, keen workers.

## **2 Kings 6:4 -**

They were equipped with the right tools for falling trees and the work of building.

Here, then, is a pattern to be approved. How great it would be if all the Lord's workers had these sevenfold characteristics!

But, in the story we notice there is -

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## **2. A PERIL TO BE AVOIDED.**

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### **2 Kings 6:5 -**

One worker lost his axe head, the sharp cutting edge of all his service, without which all effort was useless. He did not lose the handle. From a distance, it might have appeared as though his equipment was complete, but it was not complete.

### **Zechariah 4:6 -**

How foolish it would have been for him to have gone on working! He was working well, but, gradually the axe head slipped down the helve of the axe - into the water!

It was a gradual process, as is all backsliding. He lost his power and effectiveness.

Notice -

- a. He lost his power while he was working.*

### **1 Kings 20:40 -**

2. Perhaps he was working too energetically.

### **1 Corinthians 2:4 -**

- c. What he lost was borrowed.*

**Psalm 62:11 -**

3. He was conscious of his loss.

**Judges 16:20 -**

- e. He was deeply distressed about his loss.*

**Job 23:3 -**

Have you lost the axe head? You used to know His power resting upon you, but now is your cry: “Where is the blessedness I knew when first I saw the Lord?” If so, this story assures you that you may be restored, reinstated and re-equipped for the service of God.

What must you do?

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**3. A PROCEDURE TO BE ADOPTED.**

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**2 Kings 6:5-7 -**

tells us about this. If God can make a piece of iron swim, then surely He can restore one of His own children who has wandered from Him!

*No one has gone too far for God to raise him.*

How can lost power, effectiveness and a lost experience of God be regained?

1. We must immediately stop working.

The man did that. It would have been foolish to try to work without the axe head! Jesus said, “Tarry.....until.....”

**Luke 24:49 -**

2. We must make a full and frank confession to our Master.

Immediately he was conscious of his loss, the man cried out -

**2 Kings 6:5 -**

If we have failed, we must make a full confession of our failure to the Lord Himself, then we may have the assurance of His forgiveness and cleansing.

**1 John 1:9 -**

- c. We must show our Master the place where we lost our effectiveness and our experience of His presence and power.*

The first question Elisha asked was -

**2 Kings 6:6 -**

He did not scold the young man. He asked him frankly to tell him what had happened.

Where did you fail the Lord and lose the conscious realization of His presence and power in your life?

Was it when you gave up your private devotions or your attendance at the house of God?

when you had a misunderstanding with someone?

when you made that unholy alliance?

when you committed that secret sin or entered into that dishonest transaction?

“Where did it fall?”

You will never recover your axe head until you tell your Lord just where you lost it.

4. Then we shall see the miracle performed!

**2 Kings 6:6 -**

Elisha performed the miracle by the use of a “stick”. The way back to God is by way of the cross.

**1 Peter 2:24 -**

His blood can cleanse us and make us whole. Trust Him. Our ground assurance is -

**1 John 1:7 -**

- e. Finally, we must put out our hand and take it.*

Here is the step of faith.

**2 Kings 6:7 -**

All the way through our Christian life, it is necessary for us to appropriate, by faith, the provision that the Lord has made for our salvation and our victory through Christ.

To act in faith in this way was a humbling experience for the son of the prophet, for probably others were watching as he bent down very low, put out his hand and took back that which he had lost.

What a glorious thing it is when, having failed the Lord, we are prepared to take these steps back into fullness of blessing!

May God give us grace to do this.

Closing thought -

**Hosea 14:1-7 -**

***NOTES***

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# ***A DAY OF GOOD TIDINGS***

## **STUDY 10**

**Scripture Portion: 2 Kings 7:1-15**

This study is based upon the story of the four leprous men who made an amazing discovery and then felt compelled to share it with as many people as possible.

In this incident, we find solemn teaching concerning the desperate need of the spiritually famished multitudes around us and of our responsibility to tell them of the wonderful provision that God has made for their salvation.

See the setting of the story in **2 Kings 7:1-11**.

Samaria was besieged by the Syrian army.

*Inside* the city terrible things were happening - **2 Kings 6:24-31**. The people were facing starvation, disease and death.

*Outside* the city were four lepers, also starving. If they remained outside, they would die. If they went to the Syrian camp, they would probably be killed.

What should they do?

They decided to go to the Syrian camp. As they drew near, they were amazed to find -

**2 Kings 7:5 -**

But they found plenty of food, clothes, silver and gold. So they satisfied their hunger to the full -

**2 Kings 7:8 -**

Then, they remembered the thousands who were dying inside the city while they had so much.

Now read -

**2 Kings 7:9-11 -**

This story is a great challenge to those of us who have discovered Christ as the Bread of Life and who are surrounded by millions of famished, dying souls who are in danger of the second death.

**Revelation 20:12-15 -**

Let us look at the words of the four lepers recorded in -

**2 Kings 7:9 -**

Notice -

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**THE PRIVILEGE WE ENJOY.**

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**2 Kings 7:9 -**

Every Christian can say the same. Every day for 1900+ years has been a day of good tidings, today included.

**Luke 2:10-11 -**

**2 Corinthians 6:2 -**

**Galatians 4:4 -**

**1 Timothy 1:15 -**

We are living in the Day of Grace when sinners may be sure of a welcome if they will come to the Saviour -

**John 6:37 -**

when He waits to be admitted into the hearts of men and women -

**Revelation 3:20 -**

when -

**Revelation 22:17 -**

In the mercy of God, we have heard the good tidings and are rejoicing in Christ. What a privilege it is when we remember that so many of the people we meet are starving, perishing -

**John 3:16 -**

They are *inside* the city, without God and without hope in the world, while we are saved and bound for the heavenly City. This is the privilege we enjoy.

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**2. THE SIN WE COMMIT.**

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**2 Kings 7:9 -**

This is true of multitudes of Christians who are committing the sin of silence, indeed, the *crime* of silence! How guilty the church has been down the years!

It is 1900+ years since Jesus came to Bethlehem and later died on Calvary, yet there are still five hundred million souls who have never heard of His love.

Thousands of Christians go to church each Sunday and sing of God's great salvation, but, during the week they "hold their peace".

This, Christian, is the sin we commit. By our silence we sin against the Lord Who depends upon us to proclaim the word of reconciliation -

**2 Corinthians 5:18-19 -**

We sin against the souls for whom Christ died and who need Him so desperately -

**1 John 2:2 -**

We condemn ourselves for our sinful selfishness and expose ourselves to a dreadful danger, of which the four lepers remind us.

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**3. THE DANGER WE FACE.**

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**2 Kings 7:9 -**

What is the result of our failure to evangelize?

When we "hold our peace", it means fearful loss for the souls around us, for if we do not go to them, they will certainly die - spiritually -

**Romans 6:23 -**

Also, if we "hold our peace", it means fearful loss and punishment for ourselves. Please read the solemn words in -

**Ezekiel 33:7-9 -**

David had this in mind when he prayed -

**Psalms 51:14-15 -**

and referred to the guilt that rests upon the soul who keeps silent when he should speak out.

This danger was also referred to by the apostle Paul in -

**1 Corinthians 3:11-15 -**

The sin of silence will result in the inevitable “loss” at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

How we have failed in the matter of personal evangelism! What can we do about it?

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**4. THE ACTION WE MUST TAKE.**

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This is indicated in -

**2 Kings 7:9b-11 -**

There must be DETERMINED action.

Listen to the four men -

**2 Kings 7:9b -**

If one Christian won ten souls for Christ this year, and those ten each won ten in the next year, these hundred then winning ten each in the third year, and so on, the result would be that, in the tenth year, ten thousand million souls would have been saved. Before the completion of the tenth year, the full population of the world would be gathered in!

There must be UNITED action.

“Let us.....”, said the lepers. They would do this thing together.

**2 King 7:9b -**

It is wonderful what one dedicated man can do. But how much more can a whole church of dedicated witnesses do for the salvation of souls!

**Mark 2:1-5 -**

Particularly notice **verse 3**.

*c. There must be SACRIFICIAL action.*

Notice the word “go”, not “wait” in -

**2 Kings 7:9 -**

**Matthew 28:19 -**

Such “going” involves sacrifice.

If, for example, Japanese are to hear, then fellows and girls must be prepared to leave the comforts of home, their good jobs, and “go”!

Who is prepared for this?

4. There must be VOCAL action.

Notice the word “tell” in -

**2 Kings 7:9 -**

This is something we can all do. Why do we find it so hard to tell of all that our dearest Friend has done for us? Will you today obey -

**Mark 5:19 -**

- e. There must be URGENT action.*

The lepers said, -

**2 Kings 7:9 -**

The time is short. The lost are dying. The Lord is coming. The opportunity is going.

**John 9:4 -**

See what happens when Christians are willing to “go and tell”.

In **2 Kings 7:9-12** -

we are told -

*(1) The four lepers told one porter.*

*(2) The one porter told the other porters.*

*(3) Those porters told the king.*

*(4) The king told the people of the city.*

And thus the blessing spread!

Closing thought -

**Acts 5:40-42** -

***NOTES***

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