

Day 1
September 25



Pray | As I seek independence, remind me of my dependence on you.

Independence through dependence.

Being independent means you are not dependent, rather free. However, dependent can mean relying upon (maybe even addicted to) while being dependable is others relying on you. No need to believe in God to depend upon him, you already are. Breathing? Heart beat? You can alter both slightly but as far as you are concerned they function independently. It's your brain, God's creation, remembering to do both. Don't think too hard or you might stop breathing! Ever stay awake making sure neither stops? God handles so many things: physics, chemistry, biology. He gives independence by doing everything for you. When you depend on him to supply all your needs he frees/heals you from the world's cares and influence.



Read | Matthew 7:7-11



Reflect | Spend time reflecting on one or more of the following.

God wants us to ask him for so many things, everything in fact. If we know to give good gifts to our children when they ask then what reasons do we have for expecting God to anticipate our needs rather than to simply ask him?

Giving and receiving gifts is an art form. More than investing time and money acquiring them it's trying to find something that's just right. What reasons can you think of for why you may be resistant to accepting gifts/help from others or our heavenly father?

Sometime in your life someone has given something to help you out. Many times they knew what you needed, yet wanted you to ask. God gave his only son for you. Do you need to thank him, or ask for and accept his help?

Day 2
September 26



Pray | Lord give clarity in my afflictions to see you as my only healer.

Losing it all.

Lepers are not common in modern times but made numerous appearances in the Bible. Looking at these instances the picture emerges that being a leper meant losing it all. The disease was incurable at the time and seems to be regarded as being inflicted and removed by God as signs of his power. Miriam, Uzziah, and Gehazi (Elisha's servant) were inflicted with leprosy as the direct results of their sins. King David pronounced it as a curse against his general Joab's family for the sin of killing Abner. Many of the healings Jesus performed were of lepers. Because lepers could not interact with anyone but other lepers, they lived as exiles. Knowing this Jesus' willingness to heal, restore, and accept societies' untouchables is so much more incredible.



Read | Matthew 8:1-4 / Matthew 11:2-5



Reflect | Spend time reflecting on one or more of the following.

The disciples tried limiting who could see Jesus (Luke 18:15-17). The Pharisees disliked the company that Jesus kept (Luke 5:30). The emboldened leper in Matthew 8 believed, asked, and was healed! Why is it vitally important that God forgives and heals us despite our improprieties?

John the Baptist sends disciples inquiring whether Jesus is "the One". Jesus does not answer with whom, rather, what he was doing. What was he doing that was so revolutionary it made believers of untouchables while offending those who thought they were God's chosen ones?

Reflect on Jesus' words and actions towards people with leprosy. What answers can you find for your own self or to be able to tell someone who says that they cannot accept Jesus' offer of salvation because of the _____ in their life?

Day 3
September 27



Pray | Ask God to help you focus on things other than your affliction.

Think about it: Had Naaman been Israeli and not Syrian he would not still be enjoying a successful military career, living at home with a wife or servants. Instead he would be living with all the other homeless lepers outside town as an unclean religious and societal outcast. Better still he had an incurable disease yet one which his foreign slave girl just happened to know where treatment could be found. In no time at all Naaman was on a medical vacation to Israel carrying payment in full and a letter from Syria's king asking the impossible, for a cure, on his behalf. In yet another fortunate turn of events, Naaman who was sent to Israel's king erroneously is now directed to God's prophet Elisha. So the story begins...



Read | 2 Kings 5:1-9



Reflect | Spend time reflecting on one or more of the following.

Naaman is not aware yet that his physical need for healing will lead him to spiritual healing as well. If you already know Christ, or feel you are being pulled in that direction, what are some of the circumstances that brought you to that place?

It was God's prophet who asked the king to send Naaman to him. The king (Israel's spiritual leader) should have known where to send Naaman. Based on your current relationship with God would you know where to send someone who came asking for physical or spiritual healing?

Naaman stood before Israel's king, saw him tear his clothing responding to the letter he carried. When going to see Elisha his hopes were likely plummeting. Consider your spiritual journey...are you most likely to accept God's help when hopes are high or plummeting?

Day 4
September 28



Pray | God may I consider the detours of life as times to seek you.

Unexpected, persistent, and recurring detours.

It could describe your daily commute but just as accurately it describes Naaman's quest to be healed. He was an unwelcome guest of a foreign king. The Syrian king's letter wore out any good will Naaman hoped it would bring. Now he and his retinue are making their way from the seat of power to the prophet Elisha's house. Based on biblical prophets' popularity one imagines they were not heading into a nice part of town. No doubt, too, Naaman struggled the whole way debating whether he made a mistake in even coming. When they arrived there was no welcome befitting his rank, no hospitality of any sort as a matter of fact. Instead he got from Elisha a messenger with a funny prescription about bathing in the river Jordan.



Read | 2 Kings 5:10-14



Reflect | Spend time reflecting on one or more of the following.

Naaman was blessed to have not just one but apparently several servants who held their master's interests above their own. Talking an enraged general down is often suicidal. Think of a time when your reaction was less than ideal. How did God choose to intervene?

Naaman would do ANYTHING to be healed, yet was incensed by the impersonal delivery of a minimalist task. Commitment alone should have entitled him to some big healing experience. What held Naaman back, or holds you back, from recognizing and accepting God's healing gift today?

Think about when God has given you instructions, maybe from a messenger rather than directly, and you thought you had a better way to do what he asked. What did God teach you through the experience of doing it your way, rather than God's way?

Day 5
September 29



Pray | May understanding your healing of my sins, make me worship.

Action and Response.

God acts, people respond. People do not always respond correctly because that is a choice they have. In many ways leprosy the skin condition appears to be a physical manifestation not unlike our inward sin condition which makes us unclean. Naaman could not deny his need for physical healing. When his anger abated, he listened to wise council, humbled himself and accepted God's miraculous healing without the big show. His response exemplifies the correct choice, the realization not just that he has received God's incredible healing but that there are no other Gods. He wants to worship God and give gifts of gratitude. He even wants a pardon for those times when he must appear to worship false gods upon his return home.



Read | 2 Kings 5:15-19a



Reflect | Spend time reflecting on one or more of the following.

In Luke 4:27 Jesus says there were many lepers in Israel when Elisha was prophet yet only Naaman the Syrian was cleansed. What things did Naaman do that made him different from those other lepers? (Replace the word leper with sinner, if that is easier.)

It is very difficult to save someone who does not see that they are in need of saving. Do you agree or disagree with this statement and why? Think especially in relation to sin and salvation.

To accept that Jesus died for sinners you need to accept that you also are a sinner and cannot save yourself. Accepting God's action of sending Jesus to die for your sins means you should respond. What responses should you make when you understand this?

Unless indicated otherwise, all Scripture quotations are taken from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®). Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. All rights reserved. ESV® Text Edition: 2016.