

Week 1

Naaman's Servant Girl (2 Kings 5:1-5; 8-14)

If I say the name "Sir Edmund Hillary," does that ring a bell? Most people know him as the first person to ever reach the highest point on planet earth – the summit of Mt. Everest in the Himalayas. It happened on May 28th, 1953 at 11:30am ([show pic](#)).

And, if you didn't know who Edmund Hillary was, then I'm pretty sure you don't know who Tenzing Norgay is either ([show pic](#)). What's interesting is that Sir Edmund Hillary is famous for being the first person to reach the summit, but it never would have happened without Tenzing Norgay.

You see, in the early part of this expedition, Edmund Hillary fell into a giant crevasse in the mountain, and he was dangerously close to plummeting to his death. But Tenzing Norgay was able to tie a rope to his ice-axe and pull him to safety. And when Edmund Hillary stood up, he said, "I want *that* guy on my team as we head for the summit!" But the average person never hears about Tenzing Norgay when Mt. Everest is mentioned. Why?

"The spotlight doesn't always shine where the action is. The spotlight of history may swing this way, but the real action that is shaping things may be just over here out of sight. Our names may not land in the headlines but our stories can shape history." – Ben Stuart

And that's the kind of people we're going to look at in this series. You may not even know their names but, whether you realize it or not, you've been impacted by these hidden heroes!

So tonight, let's kick things off with a young girl who is so hidden, we don't even know her name. She's simply known as "Naaman's servant."

And the term "servant" matches her character perfectly because her story can be summed up in one statement: *"It's not about me!"* So let's get some background in verses 1-5...

2 Kings 5:1-5 "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, "[I wish] that my lord [was] with the prophet [Elisha] who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy." ⁴ So Naaman went in and told his lord [the king], "Thus... spoke the girl from the land of Israel." ⁵ And the king of Syria said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel."

These verses tell us...

Five things about Naaman in verse 1:

- 1) He's the **"commander"** of the Syrian army – a term that was used for the highest ranking officer.
- 2) He was **"a great man,"** which means he was a man of high social standing, wealth, and prominence.
- 3) He was **"in high favor,"** which means he was highly regarded by the king of Syria.
- 4) He was **"a mighty man of valor,"** which is a term used in the Old Testament for a courageous warrior.¹
- 5) He had a fatal disease called **"leprosy."** So, despite all of Naaman's prestige, authority, and wealth; he was a doomed man because under his uniform was the body of a leper.²

Five things about Naaman's servant in verse 2:

- 1) She was **"a little girl"** – most likely in her preteen years.
- 2) She was a Jewish girl from **"the land of Israel."**
- 3) She was **"carried off"** and taken captive when the Syrian's raided the Israelites.
- 4) Naaman made her a slave in his personal household where **"she worked in the service of Naaman's wife."**
- 5) She had faith that God could do miracles through His **"prophet"** named Elisha.

¹ MacArthur, J. (2006). *The MacArthur study Bible: New American Standard Bible*. (2 Ki 5:1). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

² Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

So, now that we're up to speed on her situation; let's look a little closer at her character...

1. She had an "others first" mentality.

This girl had extraordinary character because she told Naaman's wife, "I wish that my master was with the prophet Elisha because he would cure him of his leprosy."

Now think about this for a second: she was taken from her family, friends, culture, and everything else that she was familiar with. She probably even watched her parents be slaughtered in the raid where she was captured. And to top it all off, she was made a *slave* in the very house of the man in charge of the raid!

You'd think that she would be angry and would want to see Naaman suffer for everything he had put her through. Instead, she not only forgave him, but she went out of her way to see him healed of his leprosy! Everything about her life and character seemed to say – *"It's not about me."*

Philippians 2:3–4 "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."

You may be wondering why God would allow this to happen to a young girl with this kind of character. If you've ever asked the question, "Why does God allow evil and suffering?" then this girl's story lets you know that there is never just *one* answer to that question.

You see, God often uses one sovereign act to accomplish *multiple* things! Just because you don't understand what God is doing, doesn't mean there is not a purpose for it. For example, God was doing at least three things by allowing suffering in this young girl's life...

First, God was using Naaman's army to discipline the Israelites for their sin. This is why verse 1 says "the LORD had given victory" to Naaman's army. So, God was using *lost* people (the Syrian army) to bring correction to *His* people (the Israelites).

Second, God was bringing Naaman face-to-face with the gospel. This girl would tell him about the one true God who would ultimately save him

both spiritually and physically! And this doesn't even include all the other people she would impact as she grew up in Syria.

And **third**, God was showing the world that young people can have a testimony that is just as powerful as adults. Think about it – in the short time Naaman and his wife had known this girl; she had already won their complete respect which leads us to our next point.

2. People noticed her faith and maturity more than her age.

Her words and her witness were so convincing that the two most powerful men in Syria took her seriously! Never underestimate what God can do through *one* young person who lives a life of integrity.

She was the epitome of our theme verse (1 Tim 4:12 on banner). And we know that God specifically chose this girl to cross paths with Naaman because Jesus said...

Luke 4:27 "There were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman."

You see, when God was ready to perform a unique miracle that would be forever recorded in His Word; He chose *this* young girl – a hidden hero – to carry it out!

3. Her humility was a stark contrast to Naaman's pride.

2 Kings 5:8-14 "But when Elisha the man of God heard [about Naaman he said]"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.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... 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.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."

Because of his arrogance, Naaman thought he *deserved* to be healed. Verse 9 says he "came with his horses and chariots and stood at the door of Elisha's house."

Naaman looked like the president rolling up with his huge motorcade. He fully expected Elisha to hurry out and show him the respect that he "deserved." But Elisha made it clear that God is not impressed by any man. In verses 10-11 it says that Elisha sent a messenger outside to meet Naaman rather than Elisha coming out himself, and "Naaman was angry."

He said, "I thought [Elisha] would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the LORD *his* God and wave his hand over the place and cure the leprosy." In other words, Naaman thought a great man like himself deserved a great religious ceremony for his healing. But Elisha knew that Naaman had to be *humbled* before he could be *healed*.³

And in verse 14, Naaman finally humbles himself and does what Elisha told him. It says, "He dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."

You see, God was teaching Naaman that a person can only approach God if they do it according to *God's* terms. And Naaman got the point because verse 15 says, "Then he returned to the man of God and said, 'I know [now] that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel.'"

Naaman ended up surrendering his life to the Lord and he carried the message of the one true God back to Syria. And none of this would have been possible without a young girl known only as a "servant" who said – *"It's not about me."*

*Her "others first" mentality got Naaman's attention.
Her faith and maturity gained his respect.
And her humility led him to the Lord.*

She was a Hidden Hero who impacted an entire nation, and she's still impacting us TODAY!

³ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.