

THE OPENING:

- **Q:** DO YOU LIKE TO TAKE SHORTCUTS? IF SO, IN WHAT AREAS OF YOUR DAY DO YOU TEND TO RUSH THROUGH THE WORK IN ORDER TO GET TO SOMETHING ELSE? (MEAL PLANNING; MEAL PREP; CREATING A BUDGET; PAYING THE BILLS)
- **Q:** ISN'T EVERYTHING IMPORTANT TO GOD? SO, WHY ISN'T IT TO US? [BECAUSE THE DEVIL HAS DECEIVED US IN BELIEVING THAT WE CAN DO ALL THINGS ON OUR OWN – BUT LET'S LOOK CLOSER AT THE WORD OF GOD: **(PHIL.4:13AMP)** SAYS [WE] CAN DO ALL THINGS [WHICH HE HAS CALLED ME TO DO] THROUGH HIM WHO STRENGTHENS *AND* EMPOWERS ME [TO FULFILL HIS PURPOSE--]
- **Q:** MIGHT THE FAST PACE OF OUR LIVES BE CAUSING US TO MISS OUT ON THE BETTER THINGS WHICH GOD HAS BEEN WORKING ON?
- IN TONIGHT'S MESSAGE WE WILL SEE AN IMPORTANT MAN ALMOST MISS HIS BLESSING FROM GOD - IF IT WEREN'T FOR A FEW DIFFERENT CLOSE & CARING FRIENDS. AND WITH GOD'S HELP TONIGHT, WE WILL BEGIN TO SEE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING IN A RELATIONSHIP & IN FELLOWSHIP.

THE MAIN POINT:

- GOD IS OUR CLOSEST FRIEND (PROV.18:24); BUT HE ALSO WANTS YOU AND ME TO BECOME CLOSELY CONNECTED TO HIM - AND TO A FEW MORE FRIENDS WHOM GOD HAS SENT & WILL SEND FOR YOU TO DO LIFE WITH.
- **ECCLESIASTES 4:9-12** 'TWO PEOPLE ARE BETTER OFF THAN ONE, FOR THEY CAN HELP EACH OTHER SUCCEED. 10. IF ONE PERSON FALLS, THE OTHER CAN REACH OUT AND HELP. BUT SOMEONE WHO FALLS ALONE IS IN REAL TROUBLE. 11. LIKewise, TWO PEOPLE LYING CLOSE TOGETHER CAN KEEP EACH OTHER WARM. BUT HOW CAN ONE BE WARM ALONE? 12. A PERSON STANDING ALONE CAN BE ATTACKED AND DEFEATED, BUT TWO CAN STAND BACK-TO-BACK AND CONQUER. THREE ARE EVEN BETTER, FOR A TRIPLE-BRAIDED CORD IS NOT EASILY BROKEN.

THE TEXT:

- **PHIL.4:12,14AMP** 'I KNOW HOW TO GET ALONG AND LIVE HUMBLLY [IN DIFFICULT TIMES], AND I ALSO KNOW HOW TO ENJOY ABUNDANCE AND LIVE IN PROSPERITY. IN ANY AND EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE I HAVE LEARNED THE SECRET [OF FACING LIFE], WHETHER WELL-FED OR GOING HUNGRY, WHETHER HAVING AN ABUNDANCE OR BEING IN NEED. **14.** NEVERTHELESS, IT WAS RIGHT OF YOU TO SHARE [WITH ME] IN MY DIFFICULTIES.
- **2KINGS 5:1-5**
- (1) THE KING HAD GREAT ADMIRATION FOR NAAMAN, HIS COMMANDER.
- (3) THE SERVANT GIRL WANTED NAAMAN TO BE HEALED OF LEPROSY.
- (4) NAAMAN CARED ENOUGH TO SHARE THE DETAILS WITH THE KING.
- (5) THE KING OF ARAM INTRODUCED NAAMAN TO THE KING OF ISRAEL.
- GOD DOESN'T WANT US TO MISS OUT ON WHAT HE IS ABLE TO DO FOR US, BUT ALSO THROUGH US, AND WITH US.

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO WITH THIS INFORMATION NOW?

- CAN WE AGREE THAT *MAYBE* WE HAVE BEEN A LITTLE PRIDEFUL AT TIMES, OR THAT WE MAY TEND TO THINK OR ACT AS IF WE ARE SELF-SUFFICIENT?
- **Q:** WHAT IF WE BEGAN TO CARE MORE ABOUT WHAT GOD WANTS TO DO IN THE LIVES OF OTHERS?
- LET'S AGREE THAT GOD DOESN'T WANT US TO MISS OUT - BUT HE WANTS EACH ONE OF US TO BE INVOLVED IN BOTH THE BLESSINGS AND MIRACLES WHICH HE HAS BEEN WAITING TO BRING.

AS GOD'S CHILDREN WE MUST ALL REGULARLY PRESENT OURSELVES TO HIM:

- **ROM.12:1NLT** 'AND SO, DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS, I PLEAD WITH YOU TO GIVE YOUR BODIES TO GOD BECAUSE OF ALL HE HAS DONE FOR YOU. LET THEM BE A LIVING AND HOLY SACRIFICE – THE KIND HE WILL FIND ACCEPTABLE. THIS IS TRULY THE WAY TO WORSHIP HIM.'
- **Q:** DOES GOD WANT TO SPEND TIME WITH YOU? HOW MUCH TIME ARE YOU WILLING TO SPEND WITH HIM? HAS GOD BLESSED YOU? WHAT OPPORTUNITIES HAVE YOU TAKEN TO BLESS OTHERS?

- LOOK AROUND AT THE PEOPLE GOD HAS PLACED IN YOUR LIFE TO BLESS YOU; HOW THEY ARE ALSO IN YOUR LIFE TO BE BLESSED BY YOU; AND TO KNOW THE JOY & BEAUTY OF BEING ABLE TO BLESS THE LORD TOGETHER.

THE CLOSING:

- **2 KINGS 5:6-18**
- GOD USED THE KING OF ARAM, NAAMAN'S WIFE, THE SERVANT GIRL, THE KING OF ISRAEL, ELISHA, AND NAAMAN'S OFFICERS TO BLESS NAAMAN, TO HELP HIM RECEIVE HIS HEALING, TO KNOW THE POWER OF GOD, THE JOY OF LIVING FOR GOD ALONE, AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO PAY IT FORWARD.
- NAAMAN LEARNED THAT RELATIONSHIPS ARE GOOD, BUT FELLOWSHIP IS BEST.

- GOD KNOWS THAT WE LIKE TO TAKE SHORTCUTS - BUT HE PREFERS THAT WE DON'T JUST [GET THROUGH TO GET TO... BUT WE LIVE OUT IN ORDER TO LIVE UP TO...] WORK/LIVE **FOR** HIM BUT WE WORK/LIVE **WITH HIM**.
- SHORTCUTS MAY GET US TO WHERE WE WANT TO GO BUT THEY WON'T HELP US TO BECOME ALL THAT WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE.