



LESSON 3 // HOW TO GET THERE

God's restoration most often involves a process. The Lord works in us, over time, to bring us to health and wholeness. There's a helpful example of this in the following Old Testament story:

2 Kings 5:1-15 (NIV) Now Naaman was commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded, because through him the Lord had given victory to Aram. He was a valiant soldier, but he had leprosy. ² Now bands from Aram had gone out and had taken captive a young girl from Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. ³ She said to her mistress, "If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy." ⁴ Naaman went to his master and told him what the girl from Israel had said. ⁵ "By all means, go," the king of Aram replied. "I will send a letter to the king of Israel." So Naaman left, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold and ten sets of clothing. ⁶ The letter that he took to the king of Israel read: "With this letter I am sending my servant Naaman to you so that you may cure him of his leprosy." ⁷ As soon as the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his robes and said, "Am I God? Can I kill and bring back to life? Why does this fellow send someone to me to be cured of his leprosy? See how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me!" ⁸ When Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his robes, he sent him this message: "Why have you torn your robes? Have the man come to me and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel." ⁹ So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door of Elisha's house. ¹⁰ Elisha sent a messenger to say to him, "Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed." ¹¹ But Naaman went away angry and said, "I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy. ¹² Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than any of the waters of Israel? Couldn't I wash in them and be cleansed?" So he turned and went off in a rage. ¹³ Naaman's servants went to him and said, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, 'Wash and be cleansed!'" ¹⁴ So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy. ¹⁵ Then Naaman and all his attendants went back to the man of God. He stood before him and said, "Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. Please accept now a gift from your servant."

Naaman was a "great man" with a major problem—leprosy. The wonderful part of this story is his miraculous restoration, but this miracle required his cooperation in the process. We can learn from Naaman's experience about our role in the Lord's restoration process. What do we need to do to cooperate with God's restoration work in our lives?

1. Know that restoration is a gift of God's grace.

God restores people, not because they deserve it or earn it, but because He is incredibly gracious and loving. He wants to restore us out of His great love for us.

In Naaman's day, a diagnosis of leprosy was a death sentence physically, spiritually, emotionally and relationally. There was no hope for a cure. Yet God graciously communicated a message of hope to Naaman (2 Kings 5:2-4)—not because he was deserving, but simply because of God's love. The Lord's restorative work in us is an expression of His love and grace, not a reward for our goodness or worthiness. While there are steps we take in the process, only God's grace makes it possible (see Ephesians 2:4-9).

2. Start moving in the right direction.

After receiving this good news, Naaman set out in a new direction toward Israel, with hope and faith in his heart! On his first try, Naaman ended up at the wrong place. He had the right desire but went to the wrong source for help (2 Kings 5:5-7).

On our journey to restoration we can trust God to get us to where we need to be, if we are moving forward with the right heart in faith. Take steps of faith in the right direction and trust God to guide you to restoration.

3. Sync up with God's process.

So often God's restoration is delayed by our demands and expectations based on how we think the Lord should work. We see this in Naaman, who almost missed his miracle because of his faulty expectations and pride (2 Kings 5:9-12).

God used the prophet Elisha to help Naaman realize that his most serious condition was spiritual, his pride needed to be broken and his healing would come from the Lord rather than a person or other source. Don't miss your miracle because of stubbornness, pride, judgment or anger. Get in sync with God by giving Him control and cooperating with His process!

4. Consistently obey God's instructions.

Faithful, consistent obedience to what God says to do always brings healing and restoration. Simply living God's way consistently restores us. Naaman had to learn this lesson and so do we.

The Lord had to teach Naaman about faith, humility, trust, obedience, persistence and patience. These brought a release of God's restorative power and they are keys to restoration in our lives.

Isaiah 57:15 (NLT) The high and lofty one who lives in eternity, the Holy One, says this: "I live in the high and holy place with those whose spirits are contrite and humble. I restore the crushed spirit of the humble and revive the courage of those with repentant hearts."

Discussion questions

1. What does it mean to "sync up with God's process" of restoration? What happens if you fail to do this?
2. Read Isaiah 57:15. What does this verse tell you about the importance of humility in the process of restoration? How can you apply this in your life?
3. Why is faithful, consistent obedience to God's Word critical in the restoration process? How can you grow in this area of your walk with the Lord?