

January 18-22, 2021 Edition

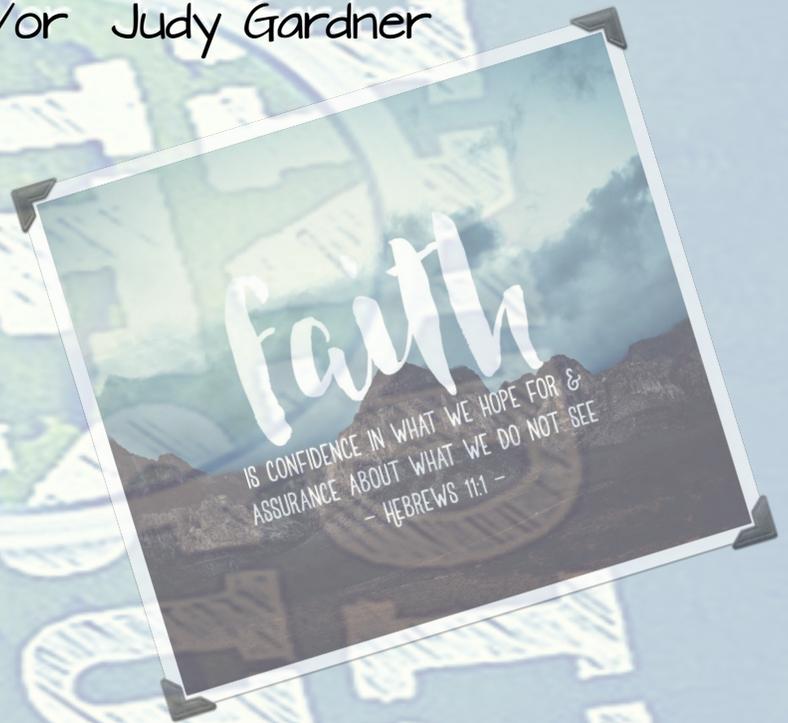
The "BIG Story" Of The Bible #33

Finding Jesus In The Old Testament

What Is Faith?

By: Ed &/or Judy Gardner

January 16/17, 2021



When you read the Bible ask yourself if there's anything you're reading where God is speaking to you personally... anything that you need to start applying in your own life. Then try to reflect on what you read... what you heard from God throughout the day and we know you'll be blessed.

*** These are EXTREMELY rough drafts so if you see typos... well you knew the rest ;0) These are essentially the ramblings of thoughts running through Ed or Judy's mind the week before Ed teaches a lesson on these concepts. They are pretty much how Ed gets ready for the weekends. They are not necessarily coherent so if they don't make much sense... sorry about that.

**** Also these devotionals are the product of both Judy & Ed's experiences and education. Figuring out which are from Judy and which are from Ed (sometimes both are contained in a single day) is half the fun.

You can also get these devotionals on Riverside's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/EagleRiverside). You don't have to have a FB account to read them but if you do have an account if you "like" the Riverside page and click the box to get updates the devos will show up on your wall every weekday (along with other news and event updates).

Monday:

Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!
Matthew 25:23 (NLT)

"Unless you are faithful in small matters, you won't be faithful in large ones. If you cheat even a little, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities. And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven? Luke 16:10-12 (NLT)

Reflection: I don't think you can overestimate or overstate the importance of faithfulness. From what the Bible teaches and what I've observed in my life, it is one of the most important factors that determines success or failure in God's kingdom. One day about 24 years ago I had gotten to the point where I went to church on Sundays but that was about all the interaction that God and I had during the week. I would slink in late hoping that all the "jobs" for that week had been handed out (passing plates for communion, saying a prayer, etc). I just wanted to sit and listen then leave as soon as church was over. One Sunday morning I went early for class. I made some offhanded comment that a lady in the class (a lady Judy respected) noticed and she told Judy that I needed to be doing more than just sitting in the pews. So they began "conspiring" against (although at this point I would have to say for) me.

About that time Judy came home from church and announced that she was taking over as the volunteer youth minister at this church (it was before we worked here). We had been burned once before volunteering for a church and so I was hesitant. I told her I didn't think it was a good idea. She said she thought it was a great idea. I pointed out all the dangers. She pointed out all the blessings. I told her I wouldn't do it. She told me that I didn't have to- she'd do it. Eventually I couldn't stand by and watch as she did a job I was more qualified (in a few ways) to do. It's not that I'm smarter or more talented than she is- but when it comes to working with kids she would be the first to tell you she doesn't have the patience and heart for them that I do. To make a long story short, that first tentative step back into ministry is what made it possible for me to one day be the pastor at Riverside Community Church. I may not know much but this much I am certain of, if I hadn't been faithful with the small job I accepted 17 years ago, I wouldn't be at Riverside today.

That's the power of faithfulness. When we faithfully do the job that God has given us to do it always leads to promotion, greater responsibilities, and greater opportunities in His kingdom. The opposite is true as well- when we fail to faithfully do the job that God has given us (whether big or small) it always leads to demotion and less responsibilities in the kingdom of God. And don't forget that this promotion that God wants to give is not just for pastors and other "professional" Christians- it's for all of us. He wants every single one of us to be faithful so that we can make a quiet difference in the lives of our family, our friends, our church, and our community.

In the parable of the talents from Matthew 25 Jesus tells about a master who calls in 3 servants. He gives each one a different amount of money, "dividing it in proportion to their abilities." When the master returned he called them to account for what they'd done with the job

entrusted to them. For the first two servants who doubled the money their master had given them the praise was the same:

Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together! Matthew 25:23 (NLT)

I think all of us who are Christians look at the last words of Matthew 25:23 as an incentive to do live godly lives. Who wouldn't want to celebrate with Jesus? But do you notice what it took to unlock those blessings and that celebration? Faithfulness. How many times have you watched as someone that you considered less talented got promotions? How often have you wondered, "how did they get to that point?" I imagine those people were faithful in little jobs that God gave them and as a result He entrusted them with greater opportunity, responsibility and productivity. The secret of faithfulness is that how we serve in small matters tells God how well we'll lead when given greater responsibility. You can't wait for a big opportunity to open up before you decide to start being faithful- because if you do God will never promote you.

In Matthew 25 & Luke 19 Jesus is laying out a principle for life that is so simple we generally miss it. The faithful are noticed and rewarded, the unfaithful are noticed and demoted. I've got to tell you, I have seen this work over and over even in my own life. The concept of faithfulness was impressed upon me at a fairly young age. I remember when I worked for Domino's Pizza. I took a job in Burbank that I only got because an old manager of mine recommended me as a reliable driver. My new manager told me he didn't have a lot of hours for me, but I wasn't worried- I know how most pizza delivery guys are. On the days I did work I told everyone that if they ever wanted a day off or to go home early just let me know. When they would ask I always took their hours. After about a month I was working 6 days a week from open til close and making more money than a pizza delivery guy could dream of. The other delivery guys weren't happy but the manager liked having me around- I always did more than he expected. It wasn't because I was a better driver than the other guys (although that came with time and knowledge of a new delivery area). It was because I was reliable (also known as faithful). It taught me an important lesson that Jesus wants all of us to learn:

*Unless you are faithful in small matters, you won't be faithful in large ones.
Luke 16:10 (NLT)*

So where would you say your "faithfulness quotient" is these days? God wants faithfulness more than He does talent. So be faithful with what God has entrusted to you and hang on... because when we're faithful God blesses us.

Prayer: Father, teach me the importance of faithfulness and remind me how faithfulness (or a lack of it) has affected my life in the past. Give me the wisdom to be faithful in the future. Lord, make me a more faithful/reliable person and give me the wisdom not to make commitments I can't keep and to faithfully keep the commitments I do make. Lord, make me that which I cannot become on my own. In Jesus' Name, amen.

Tuesday:

The Holy Spirit, whom God has placed within us, jealously longs for us to be faithful. He gives us more and more strength to stand. James 4:5-6 (NLT)

He called together his servants and gave them money to invest for him while he was gone. He gave five bags of gold to one, two bags of gold to another, and one bag of gold to the last-dividing it in proportion to their abilities—and then left on his trip.
Matthew 25:14-15 (NLT)

Reflection: Have you ever noticed that there are people in this world who seem to have gotten more talent than you did, and a few who don't seem to have gotten as much as you did. How is that fair? Why did God choose to do it that way? I always wanted to be a worship leader. I love the feeling I get when someone that God has gifted with the ability to lead in worship leads me into the very throne room of God through worship. If I could pick my job for God it would have definitely been worship leading. I also know plenty of worship leaders who wish they were preachers. Have you ever noticed we don't seem to be content with who God created us to be? We always wish we were something or somebody else. I remember reading a letter a little girl sent to God. It said:

Dear God, I read about something called reincarnation today at school. My mom says it's not true, but if we do come back as something else please don't let me come back as Jessica Reynolds, because I hate her. Love, Samantha.

I agree with Samantha's mom, I don't think we have to worry about coming back as someone else. But we do have to worry about being satisfied with who we are. This isn't a modern phenomenon either but something that has been going on for thousands of years. In Isaiah 45:9 God says it this way:

Does the pot argue with its maker? Does the clay dispute with him who forms it, saying, "Stop, you're doing it wrong!" or the pot exclaim, "How clumsy can you be!"?

Now I know most of us would never be so presumptuous as to accuse God of being clumsy when He made us, but we need to go further than just accepting who He made us to be. We need to be faithful with what He's given us to do. So back to the parable of the talents. He shows us here that there are 5, 2 and 1 talent people in this world. But He also gives us the plan for success- be faithful with what you've been entrusted with. Notice that the 2 talent guy gets the exact same praise and reward as the 5 talent guy, even though he didn't produce as much return for his master. I don't have a problem with that. In fact I think that's kind of cool- seeing as I'm not a 5 talent guy myself- it gives me hope that I can be rewarded for my work no matter what I started out with as long as I'm faithful. My problem with this story comes up in verse 26 when the one talent guy get's in trouble:

'You wicked and lazy servant! You should at least have put my money into the bank so I could have some interest. Take the money from this servant and give it to the one with the ten bags of gold.'

First of all, I was initially surprised that the master called the 1 talent guy "wicked and lazy." Lazy I can understand. Maybe even stupid or careless, but wicked? What was it that this guy did (or didn't do) with the masters money that qualifies him for the wicked label? Here is the secret of faithfulness: What you receive from the master isn't just about you and the master- it's also about others. God doesn't give you the resources you have just so you can have an enjoyable life- He gives them to you so you can help others. How you serve with the seemingly small things exposes to God how you will lead in more profound settings. When you fail to use

whatever he's entrusted you with for the benefit of others, you are doing what the one talent guy did and you will be demoted. The parallel story that Jesus told in Luke 19 gives us a little more insight into this principle. When we take what He gives us and sit on it we circumvent the will of God not just in our own lives but in the lives of others as well. That's why when we are faithful with what He entrusts us with we are promoted and when we're not faithful, we're demoted. Look at what happens to the one talent that was taken away from the guy who didn't do anything with what the master had entrusted him with:

Take the money from this servant and give it to the one with the ten bags of gold.

Does that seem fair? Why did the guy who already had 10 bags of gold get the extra bag? Shouldn't the master have given it to the guy who didn't have as much? Then they could have been closer to even. But God knows what He's doing. He puts His resources where they are going to have the biggest impact on His kingdom. In the Luke 19 story instead of riches the faithful servants receive authority over cities. Here we get a better idea of what God is entrusting us with. He's not entrusting us with resources so that we can grow God's worldly wealth- He's entrusting us with resources so we can affect more people for the kingdom of God. That is His primary concern and if someone has proven him/herself faithful then they are going to receive promotion and increased opportunity.

Once I realized that I stopped being confused by this principle. Because if you're faithful with what God entrusts you with, you will move your way up in His kingdom. Those of us who are given little can achieve a lot simply by being faithful. Eventually you can have more than people who were born 5 talent guys but weren't faithful with what they were entrusted with. So how faithful have you been with what God has given you? I'm not just talking about money (although that's a part of this). I'm talking about everything that God has invested in you: Gifts, abilities, friends, family, church, emotions. Are you faithful with these things? Are you faithful with the minor things of this life? Do you use what God has entrusted you with in a way that will make Him smile and say "well done," or have you hidden what He's given you like the one talent guy?

Prayer: Father, open my eyes to what I am doing with the resources you have entrusted me with. Am I helping others with them or have I hidden them in the ground? Teach me to use what I've been given faithfully. In Jesus' Name, amen.

Wednesday:

I have chosen to be faithful; I have determined to live by your laws. Psalm 119:30 (NLT)

I want faithful love more than I want animal sacrifices. Hosea 6:6 (NCV)

But you must remain faithful to the things you have been taught. You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you... wisdom. 2 Timothy 3:14-15 (NLT)

Reflection: Do you remember Nike's slogan? When it comes to humility, integrity & courage God says what Nike says, "Just Do It!" The same can be said for faithfulness. Our society doesn't value faithfulness very much. No matter what situation we may be in, if it starts getting tough our culture's solution is to walk away. I remember asking a coworker at Domino's Pizza how he liked being married. He told me she was fine for a "first wife."

That seems to be the way our culture sees faithfulness, but God sees things differently. Romans 12:2 starts out saying:

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world...

Flakiness may be the way our culture behaves but God wants us to be faithful. In fact, our success depends upon it. If you want a good marriage, family, friendship, career or spiritual life then you need to choose to be faithful. Have you ever seen the Karate Kid? Daniel moves in to a new neighborhood and gets beaten up by the cool kids in town. His landlord, Mr. Miagi agrees to teach Daniel karate but before they get started they have to make a solemn pact. Mr. Miagi's part of the pact is to teach Daniel karate. Daniel's part of the pact is to do whatever Mr. Miagi tells him to do. Daniel agrees and is told to report to Mr. Miagi's house early the next morning to begin "karate training".

The next morning when Daniel arrives for "karate training" Mr. Miagi gives Daniel the job of washing and waxing his vintage car collection. But Daniel isn't to wax the cars any old way- Mr. Miagi gives him specific instructions on the pattern to put the wax on, and take the wax off. If you saw the movie you can picture Mr. Miagi showing Daniel- "wax on... wax off..."

Daniel starts to complain that he thought he was there for "karate training" and Mr. Miagi reminds Daniel of their solemn pact- Daniel's part was to do whatever Mr. Miagi told him to do without questions. So Daniel waxes the cars. This goes on for a few days with Mr. Miagi training Daniel in karate by having him sand the boards on his deck, paint the fence around his house and finally paint the house itself. For each job Mr. Miagi required Daniel to use specific motions, whether those motions seemed like the most efficient to Daniel or not.

Finally the breaking point comes when Daniel blows up at Mr. Miagi and decides to quit because instead of teaching him karate, Mr. Miagi has made Daniel his slave. The scene that follows is one of my favorites of all time. Mr. Miagi tells Daniel to show him, "wax on... wax off..." As Daniel demonstrates the motions that have become second nature to him, Mr. Miagi starts throwing punches and kicks at Daniel. Daniel is able to block Mr. Miagi's attacks with the very motions he has been repetitiously working on. Without even knowing it Daniel was learning karate!

It is then that Daniel realizes that the busy work he had been doing waxing cars and painting fences and sanding boards was actually building his muscles so that when punches and kicks were aimed at him he would be able to do what was required to block them. The seemingly pointless jobs that Daniel had been doing made him uniquely qualified to do what Mr. Miagi had in mind for him- Daniel just couldn't see it while he was in the middle of it. The same thing could be said for faithfulness, but God isn't trying to trick you. He's not trying to create some kind of tension so that there can be a really awesome "aha" moment later in the movie where everything comes together. He's telling you right up front- be faithful with the seemingly little things of this life and I will bless you big time. And the deal He makes with us is the same one Daniel had with Mr. Miagi. God's part is to teach us to be like His Son. Our part is to do whatever He tells us to do.

What He is telling you to do is to practice faithfulness when the stakes are low so that when they are high your responses will be as fluid and as natural as Daniel's came to be. But there is something else that you get as a result of faithfulness that God needs you to have- wisdom.

Faithfulness is one of the main ingredients that shapes our character, which is why it's so important to God. As we grow in character our very future is shaped. I know that there are a lot of people in the world who think their future is already decided but I don't think that fits in very well with free will. I think God's ultimate plans will be fulfilled whether I choose to cooperate with Him or not- but my individual future is influenced by the wise or foolish decisions I make along the way. This is where our character and faithfulness come in. Our character points the way & lights the path to our future. It makes us more and more like Jesus when we choose to be faithful in our lives. As we become more like Him we start seeing the world as Jesus did. In a way we see through His eyes. And that's what wisdom really is- seeing the world as God does. That's why faithfulness is so important on our quest for enlightenment- without it you will never achieve wisdom. With it you will accelerate God's process of forging His understanding in your heart.

Even in the smallest matters of your life your character is being forged. The choices you make in the most insignificant of times is telling God how you will behave in the most crucial. Never underestimate the power of doing the right thing- even when no one else is watching. Because whether you get credit from people or not, God sees your choices and rewards faithfulness. And faithfulness, when it is coupled with perseverance, will ultimately result in wisdom. In fact- the more often you are faithful & persevere when you'd rather quit, the faster you will receive wisdom from God. There is no shortcut to wisdom. You can't get it without being faithful and persevering, but if you practice faithfulness and perseverance you will accelerate the process. We will see how all of this works together in the coming days but it's important that we understand that faithfulness is the entry point to enlightenment because without it we will never receive wisdom from God.

Prayer: Father, make me more faithful. Teach me to always choose to do the faithful thing, even when no one is watching. Show me what me next step is... and show me what you want me to do today. Give me the strength to do whatever it is. In Jesus' Name, amen.

Thursday

I told you these things so that you can have peace in me. In this world, you will have trouble, but be brave! I have defeated the world. John 16:33 (NCV)

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. James 1:2-5 (NIV)

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross. Hebrews 12:2 (NIV)

Reflection: It's not that perseverance always leads to success, but I wonder how often we miss out on the future God has in mind for us when we give up too soon. And while there will be times when you should cut your losses and move on- there are some things that we must never be given up on. Projects and strategies can be tossed aside when they no longer meet a required need, but virtues are indispensable. One thing that you have probably already noticed

is that troubles aren't something you need to go looking for. Troubles are a part of life. But there are some preachers who will tell you that if you're a "good" Christian (with the emphasis on good) you won't have troubles. They'll tell you that there is no need for emotional, psychological, financial or physical troubles- all you need to do is have faith and these will disappear. But that's not what Jesus said. In John 16:33 He tells us:

In this world, you will have trouble, but be brave! I have defeated the world

Now I don't know about you, but that seems pretty clear to me. As long as I'm in the world, trouble will find me. But how does He want me to handle the trouble that comes? With perseverance. Perseverance is the ability to wait under pressure. It is translated as "patience" and "endurance" which tells me the word perseverance has multiple dimensions. But perseverance is more than just waiting. It's about how and why we wait. When we hold out for the good, perseverance is described as patience. When we hold on to the good, perseverance is described as endurance. It's a word that defines how we are to handle the trouble that inevitably comes to us in this life. In James 1 we are told to:

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.

Does that make any sense to you? How can we be expected to be happy when we go through troubles? Only because of what our troubles are going to produce in us. James tells us what that is, but he does it so subtly that if we're not careful we'll miss it. He says that through the process of patiently enduring trouble we arrive not only at perseverance, but also at the very wisdom of God.

Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.

I figured wisdom and perseverance were separate entities and never really considered them as relatives before. But if you look at what James says carefully, he is telling us that perseverance leads to wisdom. It is only after you've gone through the crucible of perseverance that you are invited to ask God for the wisdom He longs for you to have. In the quest for enlightenment, faithfulness leads to perseverance which in turn produces wisdom.

But it all starts with trouble.

I know, bummer. I hate trouble too. But James is inviting us to see troubles in a whole new light. He is inviting us to consider our troubles as an opportunity for joy! The only way I can see to do that is to see beyond the trouble- the way Jesus did. In Hebrews 12 we're told that Jesus...

...for the joy set before him endured the cross.

What joy? Certainly not the joy of the cross. The cross only promised pain, agony & death. So what joy was it that was set before Him? It had to have been what the cross promised- salvation for you and me. He knew that the cross was nothing but trouble, yet He endured it

because He would rather go through hell for you than live for eternity without you. When He looked at the cross He saw your face and it made it possible for Him to persevere.

That's what James is inviting you to do. When you look at the troubles in your life don't see the troubles themselves- see through the troubles for what they can mean if you persevere.

Because James promises you that if perseverance becomes a part of your life, wisdom won't be far behind. When you realize that, troubles can truly be an opportunity for joy. You will never enjoy them, but you will come to see that even troubles can produce value in your life.

Pick a favorite hero from the Bible and usually perseverance is a part of his/her life. Joseph is a great example. He was sold into slavery by his brothers. He did pretty well as a slave in Egypt until he was falsely accused of trying to rape his master's wife. Then finding himself in prison for many years he finally gets out because of... his wisdom! What do you think made him so wise? James would undoubtedly tell us that Joseph became wise through perseverance. Even when it looked like God had forgotten him, Joseph patiently endured what he was going through. And in the end not only did he have wisdom, but success as well. It was this attitude that allowed him to face his brothers after 40 years had passed and tell them:

As far as I am concerned, God turned into good what you meant for evil.

Obviously Joseph looked at his troubles as an opportunity for joy. We would be wise (wise... get it... see what I did there?) to do the same.

Prayer: Father, teach me how to persevere when I would rather just give up, and show me what perseverance will bring me in my life. Lord, open my eyes to the joy beyond my troubles. Let me, like Jesus, endure my troubles for the "joy set before me." Show me what my next step is... What do you want me to do today? Give me the strength to do whatever it is. In Jesus Name, amen.

Friday:

But you must not forget, dear friends, that a day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. file:///localhost/QVB/::0-anchor:10 The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise to return, as some people think. No, he is being patient.

2 Peter 3:8-9 (NLT)

Remember that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize. You also must run in such a way that you will win. 1 Corinthians 9:24 (NLT)

Reflection: It's one thing to have perseverance in the big time troubles that often rear their ugly heads and threaten to destroy us. But what about the ordinary stuff that life is often made of? How easy is it for you to persevere when you're not really being threatened by anything other than boredom? Have you ever felt like you truly understood how God must feel about time when Peter said that...

a day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day.

Ever been there? You've probably been both places- where your days feel like they'll never end and where you wonder where your days went. Perseverance is just as important during these times in our lives as it is when we are going through life shattering troubles. It is often during the mundane chores of life that our character is strengthened to make us strong enough to stand when the storms come.

In the Old Testament there is a story about a man named Naaman. He was a general in the Assyrian army. He was very successful but he had a big problem- he had leprosy. One of his slaves was an Israelite and she told Naaman about a prophet in Israel who could cure leprosy. So Naaman got a personal letter from the king of Assyria (the most powerful person on the face of the earth at the time) instructing the king of Israel to take care of Naaman and give him whatever he needed.

When the king of Israel got the letter he freaked out, because he had no control over Elisha, the prophet of God. He sent Naaman to see Elisha and I'm sure prayed that God would heal him and that Elisha would be nice. When Naaman got to Elisha's place he was met by a servant who told Naaman to go dip himself in the Jordan river 7 times and his leprosy would be healed.

Naaman was mad! Not only was it an insult that the prophet wouldn't come out and meet Naaman face to face, but what kind of miracle was it to have him dip in the Jordan river seven times. The Jordan river was muddy and not even as impressive as the rivers in Assyria. I'm sure he expected some big show where Elisha might have come out and prayed a fancy prayer and said some amazing things and gotten a really painful look on his face while he moved his hands all around Naaman until he was healed. Sounds like Naaman was watching a little too much Christian television.

Since Elisha decided not to go with the big show and just told him to dip in the Jordan river seven times Naaman decided to take his toys and go home. Lucky for Naaman his friend was there. He told Naaman that if the prophet had asked him to do something heroic to cure his leprosy he would have done it. Why not go ahead and dip in the Jordan and see what happened? So Naaman did.

Can you imagine how Naaman must have felt on the trip to the river? Can you imagine how he must have felt as he walked down into the river by himself with everyone watching him? Can you imagine how he must have felt after dip number six (with everyone still watching him) when he was still covered with leprosy? What would you have done? How would you have felt if you were in Naaman's place?

You are in Naaman's place every day of your life. God has made some unbelievable promises to you that you are banking on, not because you know those promises are true but because you believe they're true. Your faith is coloring the way you live (at least it's supposed to). Biblical belief is not just "believing" that Jesus is the Son of God. It's believing He's the Son of God and then letting that change who you are every day of your life.

When you patiently endure the ordinary chores of your life because you believe, you are exhibiting perseverance. You see, perseverance isn't always about facing down lions or standing up to giants- sometimes it's simply being patient with your kids or your spouse even when they

so obviously don't deserve it. Sometimes it's continuing to do what God has asked you to do even when it looks like He's slow on providing you with what He's promised to provide.

You see, when our need meets the place where God's provision hasn't yet arrived, temptation rears it's ugly head. The temptation to take care of what God is obviously too slow to provide. The temptation to provide for ourselves what we think we need. But when we get ahead of God and try to take care of things on our own, nothing but trouble results. We short circuit our quest for enlightenment. The opposite is true as well- when we patiently persevere in the context of our every day, ordinary lives, God's blessing is what we receive.

That's what happened to Naaman. On the seventh dip he was rewarded for doing everything that God had asked of him. When he came up out of the Jordan river after dip number seven he was healed of the leprosy that had plagued his life. But he was only healed because he persevered. I imagine after dips number four, five and six with no sign of a change he was tempted to stop following God's instructions, but he didn't stop- he persevered. And that's what God wants from you. Not just a perseverance that manifests itself in heroic acts of bravery, but a perseverance that demonstrates itself in a quiet faith that changes your life. And that's what biblical belief is- something that changes how you live.

Prayer: Father, teach me to persevere even when I'm bored, & open my eyes to how to I live my life with you every day, every hour, every minute. Make me more like Naaman when I want to quit and show me what my next step is. What do you want me to do today? Give me the strength to do whatever it is.

In Jesus' Name, amen.