

August 4, 1991

"Can I Really Serve the Lord"
II Kings 2

Couples Class
Wendell Alford,
Teacher

- I. Brief review of history of the Hebrews (c. 1050-852 BC)
 - A. Assignment of the geographic areas to the 12 tribes after the escape from Egypt under Moses, institution of the Law, and the loose organization under the judges and prophets
 - B. The kingdom created and united with Saul as the first king for 40 years followed by 40 years each for kings David and Solomon
 1. The Temple had been built and established as the place to worship the Lord, Jehovah.
 2. The Hebrews had left a single agricultural economy to include trade and commerce.
 3. Israel, because of its unique location, had become more involved in international affairs.
 4. Justice had become more a matter of legality based on Moses' Law.
 - C. In 931 BC the kingdom divided with Israel in Samaria (north) and Judah in the south, and severe religious and political problems arose.
 1. Jealousy between Jeroboam's Israel and Rehoboam's Judah with almost continual fighting
 2. Hatred of taxation (support of military and Temple)
 3. Geographical locations: Israel was on trade route between Egypt and Babylonia while Judah was isolated by comparison.
 4. Solomon's apostasy left future leaders suspect.
 5. Judah had Jerusalem and the Temple for a worship center while Jeroboam, Israel's first king, erected golden bulls for worship at both Dan and Bethel to rival worship at Jerusalem.
 - D. At the time of II Kings 2, Jehoram had succeeded Ahaziah, Ahab's successor, to become Israel's ninth king since Solomon's death.
- II. II Kings 1 Ahaziah succeeds Ahaz as Israel's king
 - A. Ahaziah became bedridden because of a household accident in Samaria and sent messengers to Baalzebub's temple at Ekron to learn whether he would recover.
 - B. Elijah intercepted the messengers and told them to return to Ahaziah and ask whether he knew that Israel's God was Jehovah rather than Baalzebub.
 - C. After determining from the messengers' description that Elijah was his problem, Ahaziah sent 50 troops with a captain to arrest the prophet. Elijah called down fire that consumed the troops and likewise another 50 troops which the king sent. The third contingency of troops sent begged for mercy, and Elijah followed them back to Ahaziah. Elijah told Ahaziah that he would die because of his insulting Jehovah. Ahaziah died without leaving the bed, and Jehoram became king of Israel.
- III. II Kings 2 Elisha succeeds Elijah as Jehovah's prophet
 - A. vs. 1 Elijah's time of separation has come while he and Elisha were in Gilgal.
 - B. vs. 2 Elijah told Elisha to stay there while he goes to Bethel, but Elisha refuses with an oath to be separated from Elijah. Elisha admonishes the prophets present not to speak of Elijah's leaving.
 - C. vss. 3-6 The same sequence happens again at Jericho and again at Jordan with Elisha refusing to leave Elijah both times as at Gilgal.

4. Elisha sent Gehazi to the home with instructions to lay Elisha's cane on the dead son's face. He did so but without favorable results.
 5. The prophet then went in himself, closed the door, prayed, and made personal contact with the dead son.
 6. When Gehazi told the woman that her son was alive again, she was extremely grateful.
- D. vss. 38-41 At Gilgal Elisha prepared a large stew for a gathering of the seminary students. Someone gathered a poison herb and put it in the stew. When the stew was served, they realized the problem. Elisha neutralized the poison by adding meal to the mix. The stew was thereafter enjoyed by all.
- E. vss. 42-44 Elisha miraculously multiplied bread and corn to feed a crowd of 100 men.

III. Caring as a Christian in 1991

- A. The complexity of interpersonal relations
1. Social Choice Accounts for investments which exclude harmful products and activities
 2. Choices in family activities such as reproductive limitations and possible variations, working mothers, children day care, etc.
 3. Expanded geographic mix with more racial, socio-economic, etc., implications
 4. The Southern Baptist Convention's move from downtown Atlanta to the suburbs - Home Mission Board Headquarters
 5. The dilemma of a Christian in a democracy with church and state separation
 6. Basic personality differences, innate and experiential
- B. The Christian difference
1. The greatest commandments: Put God first and love others as you love yourself. (Matt. 22:37-40)
 2. The importance of Godlikeness in the believer (Matt. 5:45-48; Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11; Gal. 2:6, 11-21; Eph. 6:9; Col. 3:25)
 3. The new birth (a new person - II Cor. 5:17) in Jesus Christ and the indwelling leadership of God's Holy Spirit (John 14:15-21)

August 11, 1991

"Expressing Concern"
II Kings 3-4

Couples Class
Wendell Alford,
Teacher

- I. II Kings 3 Jehoram, son of Ahab and Jezebel, reigns as king of Israel
 - A. Destroyed Baal images at Dan and Bethel but still was evil in his actions
 - B. Mesha, king of Moab, stopped tribute to Israel, and Jehoram called upon Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, and the king of Edom for help in fighting Moab. They agreed to help.
 - C. Jehoshaphat suggested that the three kings consult Jehovah's prophet, Elisha, for guidance. Elisha agreed only because of the king of Judah, saying that he had no respect for Jehoram.
 - D. By following Elisha's instructions explicitly, the three kings won over Edom, even though the king of Edom sacrificed his eldest son, his scheduled successor, as a burnt offering.
- II. II Kings 4 Elisha's day-to-day expressions of care
 - A. vss. 1-7 Elisha performs the miracle of oil production
 - 1. The wife of one of the sons of the prophets came to Elisha saying that her husband had died. The dead man's two sons were to be sold to pay his debts according to the Law.
 - 2. Elisha asked her about her assets, and she said that all she had was a pot of oil.
 - 3. The prophet told the widow to borrow a large number of holding vessels from her neighbors. She did.
 - 4. She was told to close herself with her two sons in the house and from her pot of oil fill all the vessels she had borrowed. She did.
 - 5. She was amazed and told Elisha what had happened. He then told her to sell as much oil as necessary to pay her husband's debts and use the remainder for food for herself and the boys.
 - B. vss. 8-17 A miraculously born Shunemmite son
 - 1. A prominent Shunemmite woman offered Elisha bread as he passed through Shunem. The prophet passed through often and came to know the family well.
 - 2. The woman suggested to her husband that they add a room upstairs in their home and furnish it so that Elisha could not only eat there but also spend the night as needed.
 - 3. On one occasion during Elisha's stay in Shunem with his aide, Gehazi, he asked the woman if he could return a kindness for all her kindnesses. She told him that, even though her husband was old, she wanted a child.
 - 4. Elisha told her that in a year she would be the mother of a son. She was skeptical, but as the prophet promised, she bore a son.
 - C. vss. 18-37 The son is miraculously brought back from death to life.
 - 1. After the son had grown, he was in the field helping reap his father's grain, developed a headache, and had to be carried back to the house.
 - 2. His mother held him until noon when he died. She placed him on the bed in Elisha's room.
 - 3. Hurriedly she went to see Elisha and fell at his feet telling him what had happened.

II. The whys of human thoughts and actions (will)

A. Motive = something (as a need or desire) that causes a person to act

B. Synonyms of motive

1. Spring = usually in the plural, suggests a basic motive, often not fully recognized
2. Impulse = suggests a driving power arising from personal temperament or constitution
3. Incentive = applies to an external influence (as an expected reward) inciting to action
4. Inducement = suggests a motive prompted by the deliberate enticements or allurements of another person
5. Spur = applies to a motive that stimulates the faculties or increases energy or ardor
6. Goad = suggests a motive that keeps one going against one's will or desire

C. Main human motives

1. Love - genuine, spiritual love is the strongest human motive
 - a. Familial love
 - b. Biological love
 - c. Humane love
2. Self-preservation - desire to prolong physical existence
3. Religion - can be good or bad, depending on one's definition of the term
4. Need for recognition - gregariousness, social status
5. Greed - putting self ahead at the expense of others, selfishness
6. Hate - desire for the annihilation of other than self

D. Conflict of motives

E. Distinguishing between motives and temptations (I Cor. 10:13-15; Heb. 2:16-18; 4:15-16)

- I. II Kings 5 Motivated by love or greed
- A. vs. 1 Syria's commanding general, blessed of Jehovah with valour, was a leper, even Naaman.
- B. vss. 2-7 A young Israelite girl is a witness to Jehovah's power.
1. The Syrians while fighting Israel had captured a young girl who was made a maid to serve Naaman's wife.
 2. The maid told her mistress about Elisha back in Samaria who could through Jehovah's power cure Naaman's leprosy.
 3. Syria's king (Ben-hadad II) learned of the maid's witness and told Naaman to go to Israel, and he would send a letter ahead to Israel's king regarding Naaman's desire for healing.
 4. The king of Israel interpreted Ben-hadad's letter as an offense for expecting that he could cure Naaman's leprosy.
- C. vss. 8-14 Elisha intercedes in the controversy.
1. Elisha heard of Jehoram's misunderstanding about Naaman, and told the king to let the general come to him for healing so that Syria would know that Jehovah was Israel's God.
 2. Naaman came to Elisha with his military entourage along with substantial gifts including \$20,000 in silver, \$60,000 in gold, and ten suits of clothing.
 3. Elisha sent a message to Naaman telling him to wash himself in the Jordan River seven times for healing.
 4. Naaman was furious and refused, because he considered this request too trite. He said that the rivers back home in Damascus would be better than the Jordan.
 5. Naaman's advisors suggested that he had nothing to lose but his leprosy in following Elisha's suggestion.
 6. Naaman yielded to Elisha's instruction, and after dipping seven times in the Jordan, his leprous skin became childlike again.
- D. vss. 15-19 Naaman becomes a believer in Jehovah.
1. Naaman approached Elisha and confessed to Elijah's monotheism, i.e., that Israel's God is the only God in all the world.
 2. Naaman offered the gifts he had brought to Elisha, but Elisha refused to accept them.
 3. The general was so impressed with Elisha's God that he requested earth (what two mules could carry) so that Naaman could build an altar to worship Jehovah rather than the idol, Rimmon, which Ben-hadad worshipped.
- E. vss. 20-27 Gehazi, Elisha's servant, acts greedily.
1. Gehazi decides to follow Naaman and see whether some of the gifts could be confiscated for himself.
 2. Naaman recognized Gehazi and asked him what he wanted.
 3. Gehazi lied by telling the general that Elisha had changed his mind and that he would take a portion of the gifts "for a couple of the preacher boys."
 4. When Gehazi returned, he was surprised to learn that Elisha was aware of Gehazi's deceit. Elisha told him that hereafter he, Gehazi himself, would contract Naaman's leprosy and also pass the disease to his descendants in perpetuity.

III. Types of hostility (interpersonal)

A. Corporate

1. National (war)
2. Corporations (product or service jealousy, competition)
3. Familial (feud)
4. Racial (can also be related to nationality)
5. Regional (geographic, continental)

B. Personal or individual

1. From past experience in relating to others
2. With self (usually affects relations with others)

IV. Overcoming hostility

A. Psychiatrist, psychologist, therapist, counselor

B. Self-evaluation and effective decision change

C. Experiences which bring about change

D. The added dimensions for the believer in Jesus Christ, the Christian who is led by God's Holy Spirit

1. Spiritual fellowship with the Creator, Father by creation (physical) and by recreation (spiritual), in prayer, worship, and living experiences
2. Fellowship with other believers
3. Studying God's word
4. Positive attitude which is nurtured by faith in Jesus Christ (many times gives the believer a humorous perspective of experiences and things)
5. Jesus said that we believers should love those who are hostile toward us. (Matt. 5:43-48)

- I. II Kings 6 Elisha turns the other cheek
- A. vss. 1-7 The seminary students came to Elisha complaining about their living quarters and requested that they be permitted to take timber from along the Jordan River and build a bigger place. Elisha gave them permission to proceed as requested, and one of the students lost a borrowed axe into the Jordan. Elisha asked where the axe fell and threw a stick at the spot. The axe head floated to the surface, and the student reached out and retrieved it.
 - B. vss. 8-12 At this time Syria warred against Israel. Elisha was able to keep Israel's king, Jehoram, informed miraculously of Syria's military operations. King Ben-hadad of Syria, after suspecting internal disloyalty, learned of Elisha's spying.
 - C. vss. 13-18 Ben-hadad told his military personnel to find Elisha and bring him to him. Elisha was in Dothan, and Ben-hadad had the city surrounded with troops. Elisha's servant, Gehazi, arose early, learned of the siege, told Elisha, and asked what should be done. Elisha prayed for a miraculous vision for Gehazi to see the forces of Israel up in the mountains. He saw a host of forces on chariots of fire, and then Elisha prayed that the Syrian troops would be blinded. Jehovah answered his prayer.
 - D. vss. 19-23 Elisha went among the blind Syrian troops and led them away to Israeli territory (Samaria) where Jehoram asked Elisha whether the Syrians should be killed. The prophet said that they should be allowed to return to Syria unharmed. This strange experience caused the Syrians to lose the war.
 - E. vss. 24-29 In the midst of a severe drought, Syria again warred against Israel. Food became so scarce that donkey heads sold for \$50 each, and even a pint of dove manure brought \$3. At the height of the catastrophe, Jehoram was approached by a woman for help. The king blamed Jehovah for their plight, and said that he, the king, could do nothing to help the woman. He did, nevertheless, agree to hear her problem. The woman had bargained with another woman that she would kill and eat her son that day if the other woman would reciprocate by killing and cooking her son the following day. The woman had kept her part of the bargain, but the other woman on the next day went and hid her son.
 - F. vss. 30-33 This story so depressed the king that, in his remorse, he turned his wrath upon Elisha, Jehovah's prophet, and sought to kill him.
- II. Hostility: what it is.
- A. Host = army, a very large number, a multitude (Lord of Hosts)
 - B. Host = one who receives and entertains guests socially
 - C. Host = a living animal or plant affording subsistence or lodgment to a parasite
 - D. Host = the larger, stronger, or dominant member of a commensal or symbiotic pair
 - E. Hostile = of or relating to an enemy, marked by overt antagonism, unfriendly
 - F. Hostility = hostile action which expresses antagonism, opposition, or resistance in thought or principle