

HONESTY

Choosing to be < **TRUTHFUL** > in whatever you say & do

Naaman and Elisha's Servant, Gehazi 2 Kings 5

MEMORY VERSE | Proverbs 10:9

Israel and Aram were enemies. Soldiers from Aram even captured Israelites and brought them back to Aram to work. One of these was a young girl who became a servant in the home of Aram's great army commander, Naaman.

Though Naaman was wealthy, he had a problem no amount of money could solve: a terrible skin disease called leprosy. The servant girl from Israel bravely offered a suggestion. "Naaman should go and see the prophet in Samaria," she said.

The servant girl knew all about the prophet, Elisha, who shared the words of God with the people of Israel. And Naaman listened to the girl! But instead of going straight to Elisha, he took rich gifts to the king of Israel first, along with a letter from the king of Aram.

The king of Israel frowned as he read the letter: "*I'm sending my servant Naaman to you with this letter. I want you to heal him of his skin disease.*" The king's face paled. "What?" he cried. "I'm not God! Your king is trying to start something with me."

The king of Israel made such a fuss that the prophet Elisha heard the news and sent a messenger. It may have been his trusted servant, Gehazi.

"Elijah says, 'Tell this man Naaman to come to me!'" Gehazi relayed to the king.

Then Gehazi raced back home to help Elisha prepare for an important visitor. Sure enough, the king of Israel sent Naaman straight to their doorstep.

Gehazi peeked out the window. “Just look how low the chariot is riding!” he exclaimed. “What’s that in the back? Embroidered robes . . . silver . . . enough gold to pave all the streets of Jerusalem . . .”

“Gehazi!” warned Elisha.

“Hurry,” Gehazi chided. “You’ll want to put on your best robe to meet this man!”

“Nope,” responded Elisha.

“You’re not wearing the robe?” Gehazi asked.

“I’m not going out,” Elisha replied. “You are.”

***Despite Gehazi’s protests,
Elisha sent him with a
message for Naaman.***

“But,” sputtered Gehazi, “my robe. It’s old. It’s not even a name brand!”

Despite Gehazi’s protests, Elisha sent him out the door with a message for Naaman. Flustered, Gehazi shuffled out to meet Naaman.

“Are you the prophet?” Naaman demanded.

“Uh, no,” Gehazi confessed. “But let me just say, that is one excellent chariot. I see you got the golden hubcap upgrade!”

“Where’s Elisha?” Naaman asked.

Gehazi cleared his throat. "Um, he says, 'Go! Wash yourself in the Jordan River seven times. Then your skin will be healed. You will be pure and 'clean' again.'"

Naaman frowned. "I thought Elisha would come out himself and say the proper words and wave his hand and I'd be healed, just like that! But swim in the Jordan River?! It's just like any other river. What's so special about it? Forget it."

Naaman tore off, angry. But his servants convinced him to follow Elisha's instructions anyway.

He dipped seven times in the cool waters of the Jordan River. When he rose from the water the seventh time, his skin was perfectly clean. He was healed!

"Unbelievable!" he said in wonder.

Naaman raced back to Elisha's home. This time the prophet came outside, along with Gehazi.

Naaman marveled at his unmarked arms and hands. "Now I know that there is no God anywhere . . . except in Israel!" he exclaimed. "Please take a gift from me."

Gehazi inched closer to the chariot. He could see the richly-colored robes and tunics stacked over bags of gold and silver. He imagined draping one of the heavy robes around his own shoulders.

But before Gehazi could speak, Elisha responded sharply. "No! I serve the Lord. You can be sure that he lives. And you can be just as sure that I won't accept a gift from you."

"Please," said Naaman. "I'm begging you."

Still, Elisha refused to take a single gold coin, and sent Naaman away in peace. The prophet went back inside his house, leaving Gehazi speechless on the doorstep.

“Seriously?!” wailed Gehazi. He could still see the dust kicked up by the horses’ hoofs. “Elisha should have taken something!” he complained. “If he didn’t want it, he could have given it to me . . .”

With that, Gehazi took off running down the road. His arms pumped and his sandals flapped, and his off-brand robe streamed out behind him as he crested the hill and raced up beside the chariot.

Naaman pulled to a halt. “Is everything all right?” he asked.

Gehazi leaned over, panting, trying to choose just the right words. “My master sent me to say that two young prophets have come to visit. *Please give them 75 pounds of silver and two sets of clothes.*”

“Of course. Of course!” said Naaman. “Take twice as much.”

Naaman’s servants carried the heavy bags of silver and clothing back up the road, but as they approached Elisha’s house, Gehazi stopped them.

“Hey! Thanks! I got it from here!” he said.

Elisha studied Gehazi with sharp eyes. “Where have you been?” he asked.

Then straining beneath the weight of his load, Gehazi snuck inside and stashed the silver and clothes in his own room. He hurried back out and strolled inside through the front door, whistling.

Elisha studied him with sharp eyes. “*Where have you been?*” he asked.

“*Who, me? I didn’t go anywhere,*” said Gehazi.

“Didn’t my spirit go with you?” asked Elisha. “I know Naaman greeted you. I know you took money and clothes.”

“I was just being nice to the horses,” protested Gehazi. “Making their load lighter.”

Elisha studied Gehazi, sorrow in his eyes. “You and your family after you will forever have the same skin disease that Naaman had,” he said.

“But that won’t match my new robes!” Gehazi moaned.

Sure enough, Gehazi’s skin was soon covered with sores, just as Naaman’s had been. His lie had won him some new clothes, but it had cost him Elisha’s trust—and a full and healthy life.



Let's
Talk!

Has anyone ever lied to you?

Share with each other how it felt. It hurts when someone doesn't tell you the truth. And what's more, you start to wonder whether they'll do it again. It's hard to trust that person, especially if they've lied or hidden the truth more than once. That's why it's so important for you to be honest, too! If you aren't truthful with your parents, it's tough for them to trust you with privileges—like screen time or a later bedtime. If you aren't truthful with your boss, you're probably not getting a raise. Are there specific times when you're tempted to be untruthful? Pray for each other that you would have the courage to always tell the truth and that you'd be trustworthy in all situations.