

PFI PRONTO

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 8: The God Who Loves

Unit 8 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"What Is God's Love for His People Like?"

PFI NIV Songs 8, Tracks 3,4

Unit 8 Bible Verse and Song: 1 Chronicles 16:34 NIV 1984

"Give thanks to the LORD for He is good. His love endures forever."

PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 1:

God Blesses All People with Many Good Gifts

God has given many good gifts to all people--whether they love and obey Him or not. He made this beautiful world for all to enjoy. He has given each of us a heart to know and love Him and others. He has given each of us a body to do many different, wonderful things. He provides the sun and rain, the hot and cold, to grow the food we need. He keeps all living things alive each day. These are just some of the many good gifts God has blessed us with.

Why did God give us these good gifts? To enjoy them, to understand what He is like, and to glorify Him for giving them to us. Everyone should glorify God for His many good gifts given to them, but especially God's people. They enjoy the same good gifts as everyone else and far, far more. God is their Heavenly Father and they are His dearly loved children. Jesus died to save them from their sins. The Holy Spirit lives inside them and helps them to love, obey and enjoy God. And one day, they will get to live with Him forever. These are the very best gifts of all. They are gifts that can be ours even today, if we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

BIBLE VERSE

How do I know this is true? The Bible tells me so!

Bible Truth 1 Bible Verse: Psalm 145:9-10,13,15-17

"The LORD is good to all; He has compassion on all He has made. All you have made will praise you, O LORD; your saints will extol you... The LORD is faithful in all his words and kind in all his works... The eyes of all look to You, and You give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made."

CASE STORY

2 Kings 5

Our story is called:

The Case of the Gift-seeking General.

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. Who was the general? What gift was he seeking? Why would it be odd if he received this gift?
2. What gift did he find that he wasn't looking for?

Our story today takes place in Old Testament times, in Aram, about 800 years before Jesus lived on earth.

The kingdom of Aram that lay just north and east of Israel. It was a land of shifting sands and dry wilderness, except for one high, flat plain surrounded in snow-capped mountains. Melted snow flowed down out of the mountains through the rivers Abana and Pharpar, and watered the plain. Here the people of Aram grew delicious almonds, dates, pomegranates, and wheat. And here they built their great capital city, Damascus.

The King of Aram, Ben Hadad II, lived in Damascus, too, and what a good life he enjoyed. He had the best food from the plain; tons of gold and silver; lots of servants; rich clothes and many fine things. His father, King Ben Hadad I, gave him some of these, but many of them he had taken from other countries--especially Israel! Now the two countries were fierce enemies.

General Naaman led King Ben Hadad's great army. He was clever, brave and a very, very good shot. Some say it was Naaman who killed King Ahab of Israel by shooting an arrow in the tiny space between the breastplate and his chain mail. Now that's a good shot!

King Ben Hadad II treated his great general very well. He gave him a beautiful chariot pulled by horses. He gave him many riches and slaves from the enemies he defeated. King Ben Hadad II, even let Naaman be his personal escort to offer worship gifts of thanks at the very Temple of Rimmon, the greatest of Aram's gods.

Like all the people of Aram, General Naaman believed that Rimmon was the god of Thunder. He believed Rimmon gave them water to grow good crops on the plain and gave them the power to beat their enemies. No wonder Naaman thought it an honor to present worship gifts with the king at Rimmon's Temple! Surely Rimmon have given him all the victories in battle and all the good things he enjoyed! How proud Naaman was of his riches, the favor of the king and the blessing of Rimmon! He seemed

CASE STORY

to have everything.

Yet for all of Naaman's good things, there was one more he wanted very much that neither he, nor the king, nor even Rimmon could give: healing. You see, General Naaman had a disease called leprosy. He had flaky and patchy spots all over his skin. They swelled up and oozed out fluid. It looked awful, but it felt even worse. General Naaman was miserable.

Then one day, help came from a most unusual place—a little Israelite girl. Naaman had captured on a raid on Israel and made her his wife's servant. Can you imagine being taken from your home by soldiers and forced to work as a slave? It would be easy to hate Naaman, but that's not what this little girl did. There was one very good thing that had not been taken away from that little girl when she was captured. Something better than all the other good things that she had enjoyed at home: she knew the LORD, the one, true God. She knew He was still with her, right there, far from home, in Aram. She trusted His good plan for her life; and so this little girl chose to help her master and mistress however she could.

The little girl noticed how General Naaman suffered from his leprosy. One day as told Naaman's wife: "If only my master General Naaman would see the prophet [Elisha] who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy!"

Naaman's wife told the exciting news to her husband. Could Elisha really heal him? Would Elisha heal him? After all, wasn't he the great general who had been attacking Israel and taking away its riches and people? Perhaps a rich present, perhaps a letter from the king would be needed to persuade Elisha to help him. The king was happy to help. What was good for his general was good for him and his armies. "Go," the king told General Naaman. "Take this letter to the king of Israel, ordering him to make his prophet heal you. Take a rich present for the prophet, too."

A rich treasure indeed was prepared. There were 750 pounds of silver, 150 pounds of gold, and enough exquisite, silky, colorful cloth to make 10 of the finest sets of clothes—it would take about 750 million dollars in today's money to equal that rich treasure. It was a huge payment, but Naaman was worth it. He was a great man. He was a proud man. Favored by the king. Blessed by the god Rimmon. He enjoyed many good things. These riches given to pay for his healing was yet another one.

Across a hundred miles of wilderness Naaman and his

servants rode, down to the palace of the King of Israel in Samaria. "Take this letter to your king," Naaman told a servant.

The king was upset when he read the letter. He couldn't heal Naaman or make Elisha heal him either. Only the LORD had the power to heal. He was the one, true God, who blessed all people with good things. He alone has the power to heal. "Would war break out because I can't heal the general? What should I do?" the king wondered. The king was worried, but not Elisha. "Send the man to me," he told the king. So away went Naaman, with his chariots full of treasure, to Elisha's house.

Naaman waited for Elisha to come out quickly, bow before him and perform his healing magic, just like the prophets of Rimmon did. Surely the great treasure would make him eager to serve. But Naaman was wrong. Elisha refused to even appear before Naaman. He was making a point: The LORD was not like Rimmon. He was the one, true God. And Elisha wasn't some fake magic-maker like Rimmon's prophets who made up stuff to please their king. The LORD was the one who gave him power to heal. So Elisha sent a lowly servant to great general Naaman with a message: "Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan [River], and you will be healed."

Naaman was furious! How dare Elisha treat him like a nobody! "I thought Elisha would call on the name of the LORD, wave his hand over my leprosy and cure me," he said. "If just wants me to wash in a river, I could have stayed home and washed in the Abana or the Pharpar," he said. "I'm just going to go home!"

Naaman's servants tried to calm their master. 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!' they said to him.

Naaman agreed. "So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan River seven times, as Elijah instructed and was completely healed! Now Naaman could see he had been wrong. He was not such a great man and Rimmon was not such a great god. Now he knew that the LORD was the one, true God. It was He who had been giving him all the good things he had enjoyed. And now this great, one true God, had given him two of the best gifts of all: healing of his leprosy and faith in Him! How loving the LORD had been to him, even him—a great enemy of His people!

"Naaman along with his servants went back to Elisha's

house. He stood before Elisha 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." But Elisha refused to take any of it, no matter how Naaman urged him. Elisha wanted to make sure that Naaman knew it was the LORD who was the giver of his healing, not him. He should not be paid for something he did not do.

"If you will not," said Naaman, "please let me, your servant, be given as much earth as a pair of mules can carry [I will take it home to build upon it an altar to worship the LORD] for your servant will never again make burnt offerings and sacrifices to any other god but the LORD. But may the LORD forgive your servant for this one thing: When my master [King Ben Hadad] enters the temple of Rimmon to bow down and he is leaning on my arm and I bow there also—when I bow down in the temple of Rimmon, may the LORD forgive your servant for this."

"Go in the peace of the LORD," Elisha reassured the general. And that is just what he did. And now in Damascus there would be two who worshiped the LORD together: a humble little servant girl...and a once proud general.

Something for You and Me

Our Bible Truth is:

God Blesses All People with Many Good Gifts

Our Bible Verse is: Psalm 145: 9-10,13,15-17

"The LORD is good to all; He has compassion on all He has made. All you have made will praise you, O LORD; your saints will extol you... The Lord is faithful in all his words and kind in all his works... The eyes of all look to You, and You give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made."

Isn't it amazing that the LORD would choose to heal this great, proud man who killed so many Israelites? Isn't it amazing that He would give General Naaman not just healing, but forgiveness of sins and faith in Him? Who is like the LORD! He is so loving that He gives even the best of gifts, even to His enemies? That is great news for us, too. For we all have proud hearts. We all like to make ourselves great. We act like His enemies, too. Too often we want to do things our own way, not His way. Too often we forget that every one of the good things we enjoy are gifts from the LORD. Yet, in His mercy and kindness to us, He keeps

giving us so many good things. And to all who confess their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior, He forgives their sins and makes them His children to know Him and enjoy Him forever. Let's praise God for being the Giver of All Good Gifts to All People. Let's ask Him to help us to thank Him for all His good gifts to us. Let's ask Him to help us to turn from our sins and give us faith to believe in His Son Jesus as our Savior.

Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU	BIBLE TRUTH HYMN
<p>1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False: God only gives good gifts to people who love and obey Him. Answer: False. God showers all people with so many good things, whether they love and obey Him or not. Though, the very best of all His good gifts are those we receive when we repent of our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. These we can only know if we become His people.</p> <p>2. Crack the Case Questions a. Who was the general? What gift was he seeking? Why would it be odd if he received this gift? Answer: General Naaman. Healing for his leprosy. He was the enemy of Israel. He had fought against and killed the people of Israel, God's people. Why would the LORD help him?</p> <p>b. What gift did he find that he wasn't looking for? Answer: He found faith in the LORD and salvation in Him.</p> <p>3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Psalm 145:9-10,13,15-17 "The LORD is good to all; He has compassion on all He has _____. All you have made will praise you, O LORD; your saints will extol you... The LORD is faithful in all his _____ and kind in all his works... The eyes of all _____ to You, and You give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and _____ the desires of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made." Answers: made; words; look; satisfy.</p>	<p>Be Thou My Vision <i>PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 6</i></p> <p>Verse 3 Riches I heed not, or man's empty praise, Thou mine inheritance, now and always; Thou and Thou only, first in my heart, High King of heaven, my treasure Thou art.</p> <p>Words: Ancient Irish; tr. Mary E. Byrne; versified, Eleanor H. Hull Music: Traditional Irish Melody; harm. David Evans</p> <p>Riches are a good gift from God. We use them to buy many good things that we enjoy. When people praise us for good/important things we do, that is a good gift from God, too. We all like to be encouraged and valued. These are good gifts, but they are not the best gift. The best gift we can have is when we become one of God's people and God, Himself, is our treasure and inheritance. That makes riches and people's praise worth almost nothing ("empty") in comparison.</p>
AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY	BIBLE VERSE SONG
<p><i>A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication</i></p> <p>A God, we praise You for being so compassionate to all, even though we are rebels against You and Your good ways.</p> <p>C God, we confess that like Naaman, we enjoy many good things, but many times fail to praise and thank You as the good giver of them.</p> <p>T God, we thank You for seeking out sinners, like Naaman and like us. You have brought the good news of salvation to us, even when we weren't looking for it.</p> <p>S God, we ask that You would work in our hearts that we might turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Make us thankful for all the good gifts You gives us each and every day of our lives.</p>	<p>The LORD Is Good <i>PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 7</i></p> <p>The LORD is good to all, He has compassion on all He's made, He is faithful to all His promises and loving to all He's made. The LORD is good to all, He has compassion on all He's made, He is faithful to all His promises and loving to all He's made. And the eyes of all look to You, And the eyes of all look to You, For You open Your hand, And satisfy the desires of ev'ry living thing. Psalm One-forty-five, nine through sixteen.</p> <p>Words: adapted from Psalm 145:9,13,15-16 NIV 1984 Music: Constance Dever ©2012</p> <p>The LORD is our creator. He made us and provides for us all. Out of His goodness, love and compassion, the LORD pours out blessings of many good things on all people as well as everything else He has made.</p>