Week Overview:

“Almost healed”

It is naturally easier to cling to comfortable patterns than it is to take one or more risks and face the possibility that the outcome may not be what you desired. There is always the possibility of meager results, disappointment, humiliation, and failure.

For these reasons, even positive change can be intimidating for any of us. In order to attempt something new, we need some measure of desperation. We must be convinced that the risk we are about to take is worth the effort even in cases where the results are not guaranteed. Yes, you might strike out in front of your peers. Yes, you might sound awful the first time people hear you sing or play an instrument. Yes, you might be turned down for a date. Yes, you might put a post on Facebook that others criticize. Yes, you might not get that job you interview for. Yes, you might have to call a professional to fix the DIY home repair.

In all these cases the reward of taking risks must somehow be stronger than the potential negatives in the equation. Or we will do nothing.

Christian faith is built around the reality of God’s absolute faithfulness. But his character does not guarantee the outcome of any particular event. Abraham waited many years for an heir. John the Baptist was brutally murdered by Herod. Paul followed God’s perfect plan and was shipwrecked and beaten. The faith that clings tightly to God’s ultimate purposes recognizes that our immediate purposes all have a measure of uncertainty about them.

So what are we to do? We explore that question in this study. We will look at how life with Jesus is richer, deeper, and more fruitful when we step out in faith even when the immediate outcome is not guaranteed. God’s promises to reward those who seek him and trust him are amazing. They far outweigh the security we think we will gain when we choose to trust only in ourselves or those things we think make us secure.

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7. When it came to the most important moment of Naaman’s healing, he first chose to forget it and turn back home! Look at verses 11-12 and discuss why Naaman almost threw away this chance to be better.

8. God’s plan did not match Naaman’s expectations. What are some of the expectations you see people bring to God that almost guarantee they will be disappointed or quit?

9. What causes Naaman to reconsider his initial decision to abandon this process and go back home?

10. What is it you need to be reminded of (like Naaman) in order to trust God in areas of your life and not give up?

11. Discuss ways we can help each other grow confident in Jesus rather than yield to discouragement or indifference.
2 KINGS 5:1-15

1 Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master and in high favor, because by him the LORD had given victory to Syria. He was a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper. 2 Now the Syrians on one of their raids had carried off a little girl from the land of Israel, and she worked in the service of Naaman’s wife. 3 She said to her mistress, “Would that my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy.” 4 So Naaman went in and told his lord, “Thus and so spoke the girl from the land of Israel.” 5 And the king of Syria said, “Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel.”

So he went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothes. 6 And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which read, “When this letter reaches you, know that I have sent to you Naaman my servant, that you may cure him of his leprosy.” 7 And when the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, “Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? Only consider, and see how he is seeking a quarrel with me.”

8 But when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent to the king, saying, “Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come now to me, that he may know that there is a prophet in Israel.” 9 So Naaman came with his horses and chariots and stood at the door of Elisha’s house. 10 And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, “Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean.” 11 But Naaman was angry and went away, saying, “Behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call upon the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper. 12 Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?” So he turned and went away in a rage. 13 But his servants came near and said to him, “My father, it is a great word the prophet has spoken to you; will you not do it? Has he actually said to you, ‘Wash, and be clean’?” 14 So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

The process of trusting God begins with admitting that we have a place in our lives where we need God’s help. We’re dissatisfied. Something is not what it should be. And we can’t fix it by ourselves. We might have a problem with anger, fear, or worry, that won’t go away on its own. Or maybe we feel very superficial spiritually because we don’t connect with Jesus much. Perhaps we feel lonely because we hide from others. Or we might spend too much time watching TV or mindlessly surfing the internet.

Trusting God starts when we face something in our lives that is crying out for change, something that we know could be different, but that seems bigger than we are at the moment. For Naaman, it was leprosy.

1. Discuss some of the reasons why we tolerate stuff in our lives that could be different, but that we choose to live with instead. What make us do that?

2. In verses 2-3, what causes Naaman to begin to think that his life could be better?

3. Why do you think he paid attention to the words of a little girl?

4. Discuss a time in your own life when God brought you hope from an unexpected place.

5. Discuss some of the initiatives Naaman took in verses 4-9. What does that tell you about him?

6. What happened between Naaman and various individuals in verses 4-8? What would have been encouraging for him? What would have been discouraging? Why do you think he kept going?