

Closed Doors When God Makes You Mad - Romans 12

by Phil Beach Jr.

Phil Beach Jr. explores the significance of closed doors in our lives and how to respond positively to God's guidance.

Duration: 52:50

Scripture: Romans 12:1

Topics: "Direction", "God's Guidance", "Responding to Closed Doors"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the significance of understanding God's closed doors in our lives, urging believers to respond appropriately rather than react with frustration or anger. He outlines common wrong responses, such as trying to reopen closed doors, emotional breakdowns, blaming others, and outright rebellion against God. Instead, he encourages waiting on God, seeking His purpose, and remaining faithful in our current responsibilities. The sermon highlights that God's ways are higher than ours, and true healing and blessings come when we align our desires with His will. Ultimately, Beach calls for a transformation in how we view God, ourselves, and others, leading to a life of genuine love and service.

Transcript

...does not come from my own creation. It is faith that God has placed in my heart. And this faith is telling me that God has a specific word for us tonight.

God has a specific word through His holy word, the Bible, for each one of us tonight. Now, I'm asking God that through the proclaiming of His word tonight that He will specifically, I mean specifically, right plum in the center, speak to your heart. I have faith and I believe that God's going to do that very thing.

Now, I'm going to ask God to open up our understanding so that we can be recipients to the word of God and that each and every one of us can leave tonight and say, God specifically spoke to me in response to a desire that I've been asking Him to speak to me about. And I believe this is going to happen. Heavenly Father, we thank You and we praise You for Your faithfulness.

We thank You, Lord, that You know everything. That You know the beginning, You know the end, and You know the journey in between. Father, I thank You that You're not waking up every morning and being surprised, that things are not taking You by surprise, that You're not a little bit distressed on Your throne,

talking to Jesus as Your Son saying, now, what do You think we should do? I am a little bit confused.

Let's consult the Holy Spirit. No, Lord, You're not doing this, but You are God. You understand all things.

Not only do You understand all things, but You are in control. Now, Father, I'm asking that You'll take Your word tonight and You will so speak to our hearts as to give us that specific word. You know every person's situation here tonight.

You know what we're going through. You know the reactions that we are presently experiencing in the situation. You know the things that are surrounding us.

I pray by the power of the Holy Spirit that You will speak to our hearts so that we can say, surely, God has met my need. We give You this service tonight and pray that You'll be glorified and honored in Jesus' name. Amen and amen.

The first lesson, we're going to break this up into three lessons. This is the best way that I know how to do this. The first lesson that we're going to discuss tonight is entitled, When God Closes a Door.

Now, before we get into this, I do not want you to associate God closing a door to some spectacular opportunity that may have come your way. I'm talking about not just the spectacular things, but the little things. When God closes a door in your life.

Now, let me just ask a series of questions before we begin this little teaching. A series of questions. How many have ever had plans about the future that you have felt God was going to prosper in the near future and suddenly the door was shut, slam closed, right? And it almost knocked your nose right off.

How many have ever had strong aspirations, possibly about other people, and you felt God was opening up doors for other people, maybe in your life directly or indirectly, and possibly you were believing God for something in another person's life and all of a sudden the door seemingly was closed right in front of you again. So, we can all relate to the experience that happens when God closes a door. Now, beloved, this is a very, very crucial lesson to learn.

Because if you've not been a Christian very long, you will learn this lesson eventually. And here's the lesson. You're going to experience throughout your Christian life God opening doors for you and the joy of walking through those doors, but on the same hand, you're going to experience, because God is all-knowing and God is all-loving, you're going to experience God closing doors of apparent opportunity that you even feel would be good for your Christian life.

You're going to experience it. And the key to learn as a Christian is how to properly respond when God closes a door in your life. Because there's two ways.

We can respond properly or we can react improperly. And if we react improperly, that could incur upon us consequences that are not pleasant. So, what I want to do tonight is I want to, first of all, discuss some of the wrong ways that we can react when God closes a door in front of us.

First of all, and perhaps this is the one that we are maybe most guilty in doing, possibly not most, but it compares to and is pretty high up there on what we mostly do when God closes a door. The first thing that we try and do is we try and reopen the door. This is a wrong reaction when God closes the door.

We can use a biblical illustration in the Bible when Israel thought that it was good for them not just to have manna in the wilderness, but to have meat too. They asked God, they begged God. God closed the door though because God said that manna was sufficient.

The Lord wanted to feed them manna. He didn't want to give them the quail, the meat that they lusted after. But after God closed the door, Israel was so persistent, and so persistent, and so persistent.

Here's what happened. God opened the door. However, Israel didn't like what happened when the door was opened.

And this is one of the dangers of trying to reopen a door that God opens. Many times we feel that if we have our hearts set on something and God closes the door, if we begin to finagle and begin to manipulate and begin to try and reopen that door, that we're going to get something good. But let me tell you something, and don't ever forget this.

Don't ever forget this. If God closes a door in your life, it is because He knows that whatever it is that's on the other side of that door, He does not want you to have it. He does not want you to have it.

He is God, He is Lord, and He knows better than we do. Even though at times we're sure that we know better than Him. He knows better than we do.

I promise you. Now listen, let me say this before I go on. There are some doors that God closes, and it doesn't matter how hard you bang, it doesn't matter if you get a bulldozer and run it into that door.

God is not going to let that door open because He loves you too much, and He foresees that if that door opened up, it would literally destroy you, and He won't let that happen. So there's some doors that no matter how hard you bang, no matter how much of a temper tantrum you throw, God is not going to give it to you. There's the safety of being the child of God.

It's the safety because God is our Father, and you know as well as I do that when our children want something, and we know because we're the parents that if we gave them what they want, they could seriously get hurt. I don't care how much they scream. They're not going to get it.

Well, that's the way God deals with us in certain areas of our life. However, and I put a however on this with an exclamation point in parentheses. However, there are doors that God closes, and it is not His will that that door be opened, but if we try and reopen it, and we persist, and we get audacious about it, and we get in a spirit where we ought not to be, and we begin to demand, even knowing deep in our heart that God has closed the door, but we get to demanding, and we begin to really, God, you've got to open this door, and we start begging and moaning and groaning, and even sometimes we get into a little bit of manipulation.

God may in His wisdom do to us what He did to Israel. He may give us what we're asking for, but oh, I tell you, you might have a temporary honeymoon. It might be temporarily yummy, but beloved, if God closed that door and didn't want you to have it, I assure you that if He does give it to you, it is going not to be what you thought it would be.

It's going to bring leanness to your soul. So, these are areas of prayer that we want to remember, and these are things that as Christians, we need to just remember as we walk our Christian journey. Now, I don't want to stay too long on each point.

Number two, the second wrong response is what I call the emotional breakdown. The emotional breakdown. When God closes a door, many times we respond in a way where we allow ourself to become emotionally paralyzed.

And usually what happens when we respond to a closed door by an emotional breakdown is three things. First of all, we get bitter toward God and toward people. We get bitter.

Bitterness is usually evident when there's an area deep within our spirit where we're grumbling and complaining and we're unthankful about a certain situation. Usually, bitterness can be detected if there is a pattern of grumbling and complaining and unthankfulness in our life. That's why it's so important that we thank God and have a thankful spirit.

That's why the apostle Paul says, rejoice in everything, because the presence of true heartfelt rejoicing means the absence of bitterness. You see, it's impossible to really praise God in all situations and be bitter at the same time. How many ever discovered that to be true? It's very difficult.

I mean, you can give Him lip service. We all know that, praise your Lord. And He goes, praise your Lord.

You know, it's that Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. So, that's why the Bible says to rejoice. So, first of all, we get bitter.

Secondly, bitterness turns into anger. Bitterness turns into anger. Now, remember what's happening.

This is because of a closed door. Something has been closed in your life. You don't know what it is.

It'll happen someday if it hasn't. Bitterness, anger, and then eventually what happens, anger turns into resentment and the desire for revenge. Revenge.

So, we've got bitterness. This makes up the emotional breakdown. We've got bitterness.

Then we've got the anger. Then when anger really grows and matures, if I can use that description, we've got the tendency to somehow seek revenge. And when you're seeking revenge, oh, revenge can manifest itself in so many different ways.

So many different ways. So, that's the second wrong response. The third one is the blame.

Gain. Now, we've preached on this over the past three or four months a number of times. But the third wrong response when God closes a door is you blame it on somebody.

Here's an example. You're an employer or an employee at a job and you are up for review. And the boss is determining whether or not it's time to give you a promotion, which would include an increase in your pay.

And you get your review back and you discover that you did not get the promotion that you expected to get. God closed the door. Say, God closed the door.

But immediately you begin to say within your mind, I know why I didn't get it. It's because of Joe Schmo. Because he said something that wasn't true about me to the boss.

And the boss believed it. And now the boss is making a judgment about my character based on what Joe Schmo said. It's his fault.

Is it his fault? Do you think God is so weak as to be limited to what a person is saying about you? Do you think God is so weak as to be limited in his sovereign ability to do things because of a human misunderstanding child of God? No way. No way. If God wanted you to have that race, you would have had it.

Listen, God's purposes are not frustrated because of human imperfection. So don't blame somebody when you don't get what you think you should get. Don't blame.

But realize that God is in control and he's trying to teach you something. Now, are you blaming something or someone right now because of something that you're not getting because God closed the door? If you are, I suggest stop blaming. That's not why God closed the door.

See, that's how deceitful the human heart is. And usually if you find something to blame, then you're going to begin to project your anger on that. See, ultimately, it's God that you're angry at.

And then the fourth wrong way to respond when God closes a door is you just outright rebel against God. And here's the three stages that occur when you rebel against God. Now, remember, you're rebelling against God because the door's been closed and it almost hit your nose.

That means you were that close. Number one, you begin to grow cold toward the Lord and toward other Christians. You begin to grow cold toward the Lord and toward other Christians.

This could be one of the symptoms when you begin to rebel against God. It's almost like, all right, Lord, now that this door's been closed and you won't let me have what I want, I'm going to show you. It's like we spite God.

Secondly, we begin to withdraw from fellowship with the Lord through the Bible and through prayer, and we begin to withdraw from other believers and begin to... We almost make ourselves insensitive to other believers because we're rebelling against God. He's closed a door in our face, so we're not going to become vulnerable anymore to people. We're not going to become vulnerable.

And then thirdly is we... First, we grow cold, then we withdraw, and then lastly, we ultimately begin to completely pull away. We pull away from the interests of the Lord, and usually we get caught up in some kind of a personal, self-centered interest or aspiration. I know a man today, today, this very day, unless he's changed, which I doubt very much he's changed.

I know a man who 12 years ago was hurt, misunderstood, abused by Christians, taken advantage of. He was a sincere man, loved the Lord, and he had all these plans and all of these great visions that he had for his life and that people had for him, and God closed the door on everything. It all crumbled to the ground, and to this day, this man stands in number four, letter C. That's my notes.

Number four, rebel against God. The third stage is pull away. He has pulled away from all that is genuine Christian, and he is presently completely preoccupied with running and jogging and triathlons and all kinds of things like this.

He's completely withdrawn, and he's completely involved in self-centered self-interest, and how that makes my heart mourn. But it's all because he's reacted wrongfully. He's reacted wrongfully to a door that God has closed.

So, let's be mindful of these things. Try to open the door, emotional breakdown, blame game, or rebel against God. These are the four wrong responses.

Now, since we dealt with the negative, I want to give a few minutes to the positive. If they're the things that we shouldn't do, when God closes the door, what are the things that we should do? How many would like to know what you should do? Someone says, give me life, help me, I'm drowning in all these wrong reactions. Isn't it fun being a Christian? Do you enjoy being a Christian? How many feel condemnation now and guilt? I hope you don't, because if you're a true child of God, you ought not to feel condemnation and guilt.

Now, you might feel conviction. God might be showing you that, hey, I've been blaming, or I've been rebelling, or I've been trying to open this door that God's closed. And he might be convicting you, but there's a difference between conviction and guilt and condemnation.

If you're a true child of God, there is no condemnation for you. God is not condemning you, the devil might be trying to, but you tell him to get behind you, because you don't have time to get swallowed up in guilt and condemnation. You're too busy learning these lessons about how to grow in Jesus, so you tell him to get behind you.

Go bother someone else, tell him. Say, get out of my house. You know the old saying, you can't stop the birds from flying over your head, but you can stop them from making a nest in your hair.

Don't let him make a nest in your head. He might be there, I won't let him fly around if he wants. But don't let him land on your head, and hatch some of his rotten eggs in your hair.

Amen? Number one, the first response, proper response, when God closes a door, is you wait on God. Psalm 32, verse 8. Psalm 32, verse 8. When God closes a door, hold on, be cool. Relax.

Here's what the Bible promises the true child of God. Psalm 32, verse 7 and 8. Thou, meaning the Lord, art my hiding place. Thou shalt preserve me from trouble.

Oh, how many times it is that it seems like when God closes a door, trouble suddenly comes. Isn't it disappointing when God closes a door? And it's okay to feel disappointed. You know, disappointment is a difficult trial.

Disappointment. How many have been very disappointed? Disappointed because something you wanted didn't work out. But you see, as Christians, we have to learn how to cope with disappointment.

The Lord says, you're my hiding place. You shall preserve me from trouble. Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.

Now listen, verse 8. I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go. I will guide thee with mine eye. Now here's God's promise to you.

If God says he will do these things but closes a door, just wait on him. Just wait on him. Because something good, we're going to develop a thought here.

If God closes a door, guess what? He's got something better. Can you believe that? Oh, but you don't understand. I really wanted this.

I know you did. But he's got something better. Can you believe that? So the first thing we do is wait on God.

The second thing we do is, while waiting on God, we look for God's purpose. We ask why. There's nothing wrong with asking God why.

You begin to ask God, Lord, show me why you closed this door. Show me why you closed this door. Maybe the Lord will show you that there is something beyond that door that wasn't good for you.

Maybe he'll show you that there was something that you were going to face that you weren't ready to face. The Bible says in James chapter 1, in order to confirm this next step, you wait and you ask the Lord. James chapter 1, verse number 2. My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally, and abradeth not. Now see, right here the scripture says that if God closes a door, you ask him why.

But you be patient enough to wait until he teaches you why. So that's the first thing we do is wait on God. The second thing is begin to look for God's purpose.

Look for God's purpose. Because God has a purpose in everything that he does. And don't take it in such a self-centered way and say God's trying to hurt you or God's not being fair.

Don't look at God's actions like that. Everything he does for you is good. Every good and perfect gift coming from above.

God has one thing in mind for you. Your best interest. But guess what? What God sees as your best interest and what you see as your best interest many times are not the same.

Guess why? Because he's God and you're not. Aren't you glad he's got that advantage over you? I don't know about you, but I feel very good when I acknowledge that he's God and I'm not and he's got an advantage over me. I hope you feel comfortable enough to acknowledge before God and say, thank you, Lord, that you've got an advantage over me.

Remember, you're not both walking in the same park. You're not both thinking on the same level. Remember, he's God and you're not.

So he has that right to have an advantage and foresee what you don't see. So really, guess what? You can come to a place that when God shuts a door, you can thank God for it. See, instead of, oh Lord, you could say, praise God.

He closed the door because he saw something I didn't. Boy, I'm glad he's watching after me. I mean, away with this, oh Lord.

You could be happy because he's doing something good. Okay, next. First, we wait on God.

Second, we look for God's purpose. Thirdly, we pray for God's guidance to open his door. We pray for God's guidance to open his door.

Now, see what we do. If God closes a door, after we wait and after we say, Lord, what's your purpose? Then we begin to pray, say, all right, Lord, open your door. Show me your way.

Remember the Psalm? I will instruct thee, I will teach thee, I will lead thee. God has a way. So begin to allow that to be cultivated in your heart.

Lord, what's your way? If this way isn't working, then Lord, teach me your way. God has a way. God has a perfect plan.

Next, we anticipate God's way. So after you pray and ask God to guide you in his way, then you begin to anticipate it because God says that he will indeed show you. If any man asks, he shall find, seeks, he shall find, ask and you shall receive, knock and the door shall be opened to you.

Next, after we anticipate God's way, we begin to thank him. We begin to thank him from our heart as an expression of our faith, as an expression of our confidence, as an expression of our offering up to him our plans so as to show him that we are definitely content knowing that his way is the best way and we're just gonna wait for it until he shows us what to do. That's what a thankful heart says.

A thankful heart is a heart saying, God, I'm trusting in you and your way is my way. And lastly, now this is the most important because this is normally one of the things that we lack. The last thing that we are to do as far as a proper response when God closes the door is continue to be faithful with what you know to do.

Because many times a disappointment regarding a closed door will produce and cultivate unfaithfulness in our life regarding what we know we should do. Now, did everyone get that? Continue to be faithful. Continue to be faithful.

It would be like this. Let's just use a simple illustration. Let's imagine a farmer has been a farmer for 30 years and he has just labored and labored and labored in his big farm and all of a sudden he had an opportunity to buy a brand new tractor.

Wow, is this gonna help him? I mean, this tractor can do so much work. And let's say that he gets as far as going to the dealer and he gets all the plans set and something happens and the money falls through and he can't get the tractor. So what does he do? He goes home and he sits on the chair and he just pouts and lo and behold, his farm is not taken care of.

And that which he should be faithful in even though the Lord closed the door on the tractor, doesn't mean the farm has to stop, doesn't mean the crops can't be picked, doesn't mean the weeds can't be weeded out, but he, because he's so disappointed, he begins to neglect what he should be doing and then he gets in the worst mess than ever. So remember, beloved, the last point which is possibly the most important. Continue to be faithful while experiencing the disappointment of a closed door in your face.

What time is it? 8.15. All right, we're doing pretty good here. 2 Kings chapter 5. Now I trust that you who do have pens and pencils are taking notes. I'm trying to make this in a systematic way so that you can take notes and you can learn from this and you can search the Scriptures.

If not, we do have the tape available. 2 Kings chapter 5. Now I preached this possibly two and a half years ago. Maybe two and a half years ago somewhere in that vicinity.

But recently the Lord has brought it all back to my mind. I went back into the Scriptures, thought it through, prayed it through, and God has laid the same thing upon my heart again. So I just want to share with you that which the Lord has placed upon my heart regarding a very important topic.

Now the first thing is when God closes a door. That was what we just taught, right? Now this is when God makes you angry. When God makes you angry.

Now, I know that many young believers would say, oh, well, God has never made me angry and I don't think He ever will. Well, I hope He doesn't. But I'm sure He will.

Okay, let's just begin reading 2 Kings chapter 5. 2 Kings chapter 5. And what we're going to do is we're going to read verses 1 through 14. In verses 1 through 14, we are going to discover some of the most, in my opinion, some of the most dynamic, enlightening, soul-searching, soul-liberating truth that the Bible contains. How's that for an introduction? And I am asking God to help you, beloved, to remember these things.

Write them down. Ask God to bring them to your mind because these things will relate to your Christian life as long as you breathe. These are things that we have to struggle with every day.

You're going to discover, as the first lesson, you have to deal with closed doors every day, don't you? You're going to find here you're going to have to deal with it when God makes you mad. Chapter 5, 2 Kings. Now, Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master and honorable because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria.

He was also a mighty man in valor, but he was a leper. And the Syrians had gone out by companies and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid, and she waited on Naaman's wife. And she said to her mistress, Would God, my Lord, were with the prophet that is in Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy.

And one went in and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel. And the king of Syria said, Go to, go. And the king, I'm sorry.

And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed and took with him ten talents of silver and six thousand pieces of gold and ten changes of raiment. And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now, when this letter has come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman, my servant, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.

And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes and said, Am I God to kill and make alive, that this man doth send unto me a recoverer, a man of his leprosy? Wherefore, consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me. You understand the setting so far? We have a man who has leprosy. And he is seeking to find a way to be healed.

So a letter is sent to the king of Israel, and the king of Israel is saying, Listen, I can't heal this man of leprosy. What are you doing asking me? I can't heal this man of leprosy. So that brings us to verse 8. And it was so, when Elisha, the man of God, had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.

Okay, let's stop right here. Here's the setting. We have a man who has leprosy.

He has just discovered that there's somebody who can heal him of his leprosy. But we're going to read in the next few verses the bitter lesson. And this is the bitter lesson.

You, when you find in your Christian life that God is able to meet your need, you're going to learn, as Naaman had to learn, that the need can only be met God's way, and not your way. The whole lesson of Naaman being healed teaches us that when we approach God for a specific need that we want him to meet, we have to do it his way, or the need will not be met. And therefore, I submit to you that God makes us angry when we come to him asking him to meet a need, and he tells us the way that we have to go, but we want to do it a different way.

That's when the anger comes, when we want to do it a different way. And now we're going to see that in the next few verses. Now, Naaman came with horses and with his chariot and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.

Now, I would imagine that Naaman found out that the prophet of God, the very prophet himself, said, you call that man and I'll heal him. So what was Naaman expecting? I'm sure Naaman was expecting to knock at the prophet's door, and there the prophet would come out in person, hello there, who are you? I am the prophet Elisha, God's spokesman. I understand that you have leprosy.

Would you like me to heal you? Well, fine, come on in and let's have a cup of tea first. I'm sure that Naaman, I'm reading into this because it doesn't say it, but I'm just using this in order to illustrate what I'm saying. I'm sure Naaman had a preconceived idea of how God was going to respond to him coming for help.

Now, what did God do with his preconceived idea? And listen to this. So Naaman came and stood at the door of the house of Elijah. Here we go.

Did you ever knock and ask God for help? You're all excited, but the problem is we have a preconceived idea of the way we think God should answer. Now, here's when the disappointment comes. And Elijah sent a messenger unto him.

There's the first blow right there. Don't you know that I am Naaman? Don't you know that the Lord by me has brought great victory? What's this, a servant boy? I've come to talk to the prophet, not his servant. Have you ever asked God for something and his way of answering it was not quite according to the way that you thought he should and because of it, you got angry? Well, who's running the show, you or God? God is.

Now watch. And Elijah sent a messenger unto him saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times and thy flesh shall come again to thee and thou shalt be clean. Verse number 11.

But Naaman was wroth and went away and said, Now, these are the most profound words one of the most profound set of words in the whole Bible. Here's the cause. Here's the root reason why Naaman was so angry.

Right here it is. Watch this. I'm reading from the King James.

He was angry and said, Behold, I thought. Right there it is. Now, who has an NIV? New Internet.

Does it say, I thought? Okay. So it says the same thing. There's the root problem of Naaman right there.

I thought. I thought. Isn't that your problem and my problem? Well, I thought God should have done it this way.

I have that I thought circled and I have a little arrow in my Bible and I have a little note. This is the reason why Naaman was so angry and bitter. Because he allowed his thought to be more important than what God actually said.

God told him how to be healed and God gave him instructions, but he thought he knew a better way. Okay? Now, this is what he thought. Surely, he will come out to me.

There you go. See? Naaman thought for sure that the prophet would come and meet him in person. Sounds like he had a very important concept of himself, huh? Not only did he think the prophet should come out and stand, but he thought that the Lord was going to call on the name of the Lord and strike his hand over the place and recover the leper.

Beloved, I'm asking God to help us. Can you see what's happening here? Here, God responded to this leper and told him exactly how to be healed. But because he had a preconceived idea of the way that he wanted God to do it, he completely got all bent out of shape and was angry and was in the state of bitterness.

He had it all imagined. Oh, the prophet would come out. He would say, Behold, Naaman, a great man, a great person.

Now I, the prophet, will come and I'll wave my hand and the leprosy will go and all the armies will praise me and they'll honor names. See, he had a preconceived idea. How many times have you had a preconceived idea of how things were going to work out after you touched God? God's ways are not our ways.

Now verse 12, Are not Abana and Farpar rivers of Damascus better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean so he turned and went away in a rage. You know, the river Jordan was a muddy, stinky river and the rivers of Damascus that he was talking about here were nice, clean waters. So here Naaman is saying, I don't like God's way and I think he should have done it this way.

Now see what's getting in the way? I, me. All that's getting in the way of what? God's promise to heal him. See, and that's usually the situation with us.

The healing is right in front of us. God has answered our prayer. He has shown us the way.

But the problem is we're not willing to do it his way because we have a better way. We have a better way. So what do we do? The same thing that Naaman does.

So he turned and went away in a rage. How many times inside we turn from God and are in a rage because we don't like God's way? Verse 13 represents the ministry of the Holy Spirit coming to us in our rage, reasoning with us, telling us to consider and reconsider doing it God's way. Aren't you glad for the Holy Spirit? Aren't you glad for the word of God that comes to us in our rebellion and says, oh dear child of God, do it God's way.

Don't be angry. The Lord knows best. Verse 13, And his servants came near and spoke unto him and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much

rather than when he saith to thee, wash and be clean? Then he went down and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, listen, according to the saying of the man of God, and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

So what's the whole lesson of this story? When God finally brings us to the place when we are willing to give up the way we think things should be, the way we think God should work in our life, and when we're willing to accept God's way and we obey God's way according to the word of God, like the Bible says here, according to the man of God, when we finally agree with what God's word says, then the healing comes, then the blessing comes, then God moves in our life and we get the very thing that we need. And listen, not before. Not before.

God waits patiently. And when Christians are in a rage like Naaman, the Holy Spirit is very gentle, very patient, but firm. Very firm.

And he will bring you to the place where you recognize that you have to put down your way and say yes to God's way and the blessing will always be there. The blessing will always be there. So firstly, we looked at when God closes a door.

Secondly, we looked at when God makes you mad. And now thirdly, we're going to look in Romans chapter 12. And we're going to close the teachings.

Notice I used a plural word. Teachings. We're going to close tonight by showing you in Romans chapter 12.

Listen closely now. Listen closely. We're going to show you in Romans chapter 12 the life, the Christian life that you're going to begin to live more and more and more as God teaches you these lessons.

How will learning these lessons affect your lifestyle? How will they, listen, how will they affect, how will they affect your concept about yourself and how will they affect your concept about others? We'll see right here. We only have a couple more minutes, so don't worry. This is not long, this part.

Let me tell you something, beloved. When God begins to teach you how to react when He closes a door and when God begins to teach you how to accept His way and forsake your way, you are on the road to a glorious, spirit-filled, a double-blessed Christian life. Any Christian that I have ever met that has ever learned these two lessons has been so blessed of God, so filled with the glory and the Spirit of God, always walking in victory, always close to the Lord.

And if you want that place of intimacy with God, you're not going to find it in three short steps and a paperback book from the Christian bookstore. You're not going to find it by hearing a good sermon here or there. You're going to have to learn it by God taking you into the school of discipline.

And the two essential lessons that you're going to have to learn as a Christian is how to cope with the disappointment of having God close a door. Romans chapter 12, beginning in verse 1. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service, and be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Some of the first characteristics that will begin to be developed in your life as a child of God when you learn these lessons is you're going to more and more and more find yourself presenting your bodies, presenting your minds, presenting your very being to God on a daily basis.

You're going to be presenting yourself to Him on a daily basis, acknowledging first thing every morning that you belong to God and that your life is for His honor and His glory. And in the process of offering yourself up to God, God is going to be renewing your mind more and more and more. A renewal of the mind.

Now, what that means is this. You're going to think differently. You're going to think differently.

And what happens is you're going to learn not to respond improperly when God closes the door. And number two, you're going to learn how not to get angry when God says, here, you can have this blessing, but you have to do it this way, not your way. There's the renewal of the mind.

So it's going to begin to change your outlook regarding God. You're going to begin to offer yourself to Him in an incredible way. Verse three.

So I say through the grace given unto me to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. Verses three through eight. You're going to begin to settle down and realize what God has given you, the gifts God has given you, and begin to allow the Holy Spirit to use you in the specific area that you are gifted in.

And God will begin to use you in a special way as you learn these lessons and they become part of your very being. Down to verse nine. Let love be without dissimulation.

You know what that means? Let your love be genuine, not fake. Listen, you're going to become a real genuine Christian. Not that you're not a Christian before you learn these lessons, but there's a lot of masks that Christians wear before they learn these lessons.

When God begins to teach you these things and you're on this road of maturity, your love is going to become genuine. It's going to be perfected. It's going to be real.

Let love be without dissimulation, a poor that which is evil. The word a poor means to shudder with horror. You're going to begin to hate whatever's evil.

God's going to give you a holiness in your soul that hates sin. Cleave to what is good. The word cleave there means to glue, to stick.

God's going to teach you to hate what is evil and detest it and to stick and glue yourself to what is good. And that's the precious word of God. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love.

You see what's beginning to happen? Your view about God changes. Lord, you're the master, I'm the servant, whatever you want. Your view about others change.

Oh, God wants me to love you, to be kind to you, to have affection towards you. You see what's happening? Your whole life begins to change. Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.

Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer. All of your relationships begin to change. Distributing to the necessity of the saints, given to hospitality.

Now watch this. Bless them which persecute you, bless and curse not. See that? Your relationship with other people begins to change.

You know what the word curse there means? To wish evil upon somebody. Listen, when God teaches you these lessons that we just taught on, you're not going to be wishing evil on anybody. You're going to be praying for everybody.

And you're going to be seeking the opportunity to do good to people and not to harm them. Ah, this is what glorifies the Lord. Rejoice with them that rejoice, weep with them that weep.

Be of the same mind one toward another. Verse 17, recompense to no man evil for evil. There you go.

You're not going to seek vengeance. You're not going to seek vengeance. If it is possible, as much as lies, then you live peaceably with all men.

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourself, but rather give place to God's wrath. For it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. And in closing, verses 20 and 21.

Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him. If he thirst, give him drink. For in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil. With good. Beloved, your entire life and behavior and the way you think will radically change to the point where not only will you be viewing God differently, you won't be, you won't even only be viewing yourself differently.

You won't, you'll also be viewing others differently. Other members of the body of Christ with incredible love, brotherly affection, but it will even begin to overflow into your enemies. Those who have wronged you, those who have done you harm, and you'll even begin to try and do good to them.

You'll ask God to show you ways to be sweet and kind to people who are bitter and unkind to you. And I submit to you that when God begins to work these things in your life, you will be a vessel fit for the master's use, prepared unto every good work, glorifying God and storing up for yourself great treasures in heaven that moth cannot eat, rust cannot destroy, and thieves cannot rob. Go for it, beloved.

The door's open. And God, if you're a true child of God, is your father, and he is committed to bring you down this path. God bless you for being.

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