

***TAKE THE LIMITS OFF GOD!***

**I Kings 20:26–30**

**Woodland Park Church of Christ**

**4 October 2020**

So it was, in the spring of the year, that Ben-Hadad mustered the Syrians and went up to Aphek to fight against Israel. **27** And the children of Israel were mustered and given provisions, and they went against them. Now **the children of Israel encamped before them like two little flocks of goats, while the Syrians filled the countryside.** **28** Then a man of God came and spoke to the king of Israel, and said, “Thus says the LORD: ‘**Because the Syrians have said, “The LORD *is* God of the hills, but He *is* not God of the valleys,” therefore I will deliver all this great multitude into your hand, and you shall know that I *am* the LORD.**’ ” **29** And they encamped opposite each other for seven days. So it was that on the seventh day the battle was joined; and the children of Israel killed one hundred thousand foot soldiers *of* the Syrians in one day. **30** But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; then a wall fell on twenty-seven thousand of the men *who were* left. And Ben-Hadad fled and went into the city, into an inner chamber.

# CONTEXT

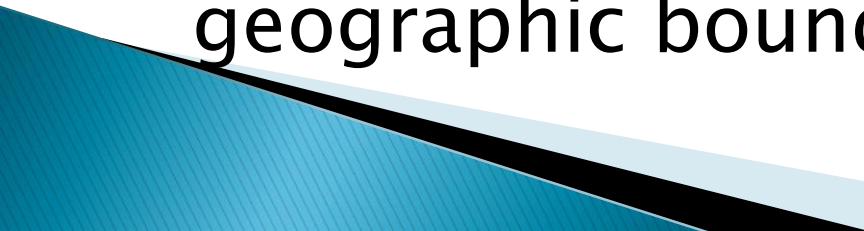
- ▶ Israel embroiled in yet another battle with their nemesis Syria (Ben-Hadad).
- ▶ In a previous encounter, Israel had soundly defeated Ben-Hadad and Syria in a battle fought primarily in hilly terrain.
- ▶ Since the days of Joshua, who led Israel into the Promised Land, Israel's soldiers had a reputation of being effective fighters in the hills, but not in the open plains, because they did not use chariots in battle.

**This prompted the following exchange →**



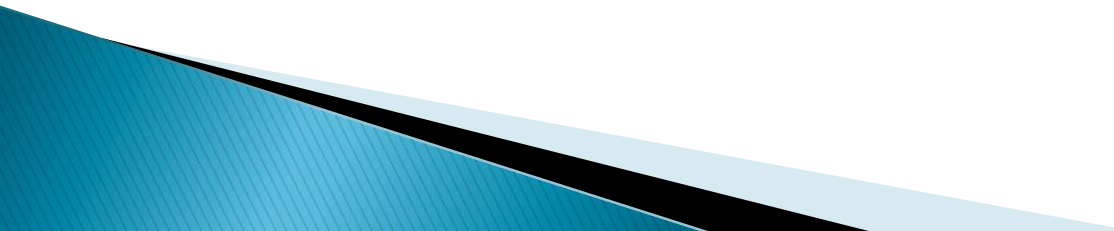
Then the servants of the king of Syria said to him, “Their gods *are* gods of the hills. Therefore they were stronger than we; but if we fight against them in the plain, surely we will be stronger than they. <sup>24</sup> So do this thing: Dismiss the kings, each from his position, and put captains in their places; <sup>25</sup> and you shall muster an army like the army that you have lost, horse for horse and chariot for chariot. Then we will fight against them in the plain; surely we will be stronger than they.”

And he listened to their voice and did so. |  
**Kings 20:23-25**

- ▶ Someone should have informed Ben-Hadad's servants/forces that they were not dealing with a phony god -- one who was the production of a woodcarver's imagination or a stonecutter's chisel.
  - ▶ They were on a collision course with the one and only God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
  - ▶ He is boundless and limitless; One whose power and sovereign are not restricted to geographic boundaries or terrain.
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*The eyes of the LORD are in every place, watching the evil and the good [in all their endeavors].* Proverbs 15:3 [AMP]

. . . He is in all places, at all times. Not on sparrow falls to the ground without His knowledge and consent.

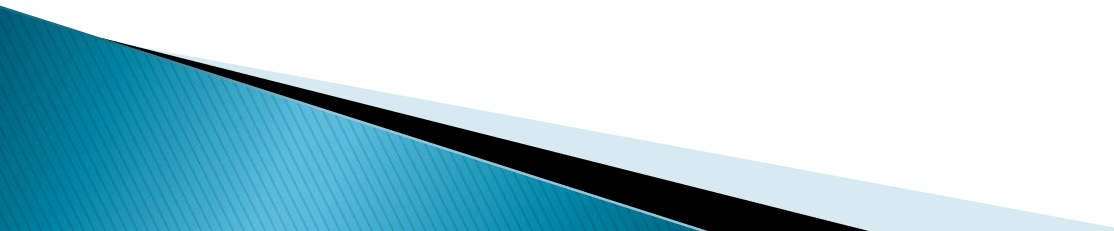


- ▶ Unfortunately, Ben-Hadad's servants' disposition is representative of many.
- ▶ God rules in this aspect or can handle this problem, but in the next round of difficulty and trial, God somehow becomes incapable of getting us through --- FEAR, DOUBT, and SKEPTICISM REIGN. See Romans 5:3-5
- ▶ Are there areas in our lives where God is not sovereign, where he can't reach and make right or whole?
- ▶ We are confident in the good times, but what about when things are not going so well?
- ▶ Easy to declare confidence, and sing hallelujah when we are sitting in the lap of comfort (absent illness), resting in ease generated by material sufficiency or abundance, basking in the tranquility. But what happens when the applecart is upset?

# Be Wary of the 12-inch Frying Pan

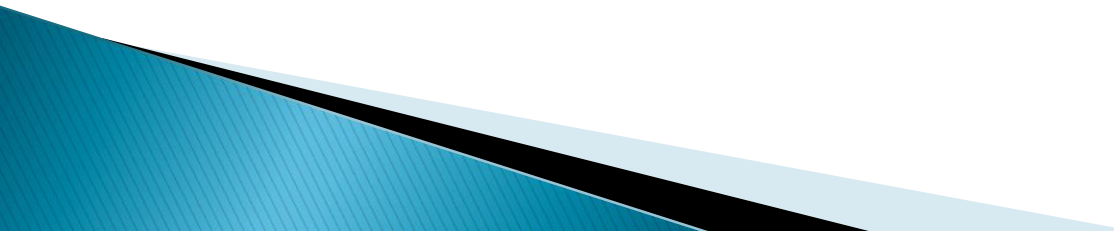
- ▶ Man went fishing one morning.
- ▶ He noticed another fellow was fishing on the other side of the stream.
- ▶ He noticed something strange about the fellow's conduct – all day he threw back the bigger fish he caught and kept the smaller ones.
- ▶ They happen to be finishing about the same time, and his curiosity got the best of him; he just had to have an explanation for the fellow's rather bizarre behavior.



- ▶ He started, “I know this may be none of my business, so let me know if I’m overstepping. However, all day you kept the small fish you caught and threw back the big fish.” “WHY?”
  - ▶ It’s simple, the man replied. “My largest frying pan is only 12 inches.”
  - ▶ Allow GOD to expand and enlarge your capacity.
  - ▶ **GET RID OF YOUR 12-INCH FRYING PAN!**
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Allow God to make a difference  
in our lives.

**When we allow His Spirit to have  
its way in our lives, it is simply  
amazing what we can accomplish  
and how much we can grow – in  
the Faith and in personal  
pursuits.**



# To Increase our Capacity, Sometimes We Must Become Smaller (Less Important/Subservient)

John answered and said, “A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. <sup>28</sup> You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ,’ but, ‘I have been sent before Him.’ <sup>29</sup> He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. <sup>30</sup> **He must increase, but I *must* decrease.** John 3:27-30

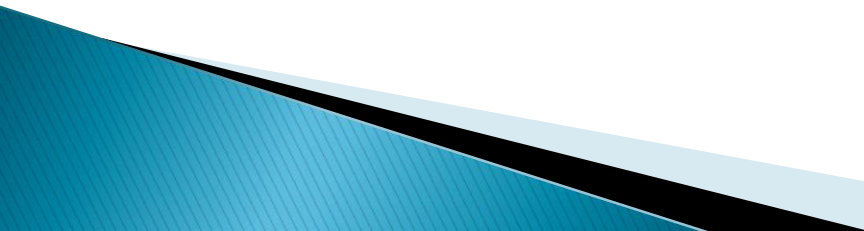
Realization → it is not about me.

The Christian journey is more about the God in us and our glorying Him than self-satisfaction.

# Difficulty or Inconvenience Evinces God's Presence

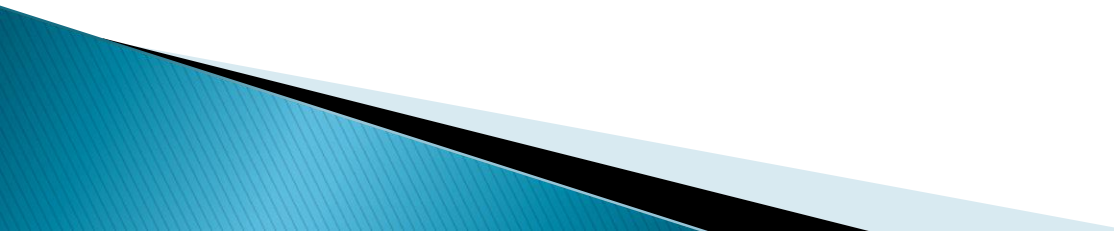
What he has me go through has to have a purpose or must be apart of God's plan to shape and mold my being and develop character.

Allow patience to have her perfect work as our faith is tested – making us perfect and complete. *See James 1:3–4*



# David's Example, Especially for Our Youth

Then David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are a youth, and he a man of war from his youth." But David said to Saul, **"Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and struck and killed it. Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God."** Moreover David said, **"The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."** And Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you!" I Samuel 17:32-37

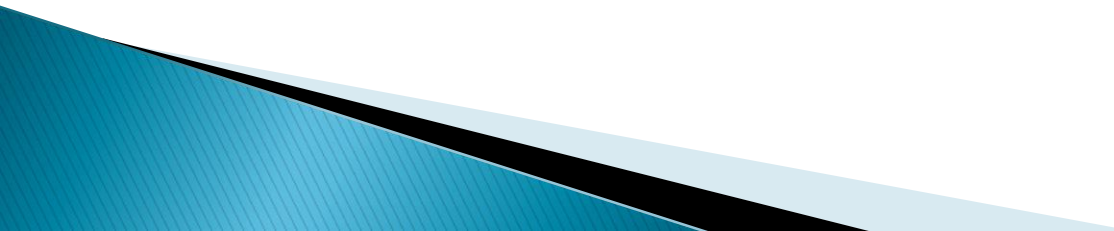
- ▶ Often, we are capable of so much more, but we place limits on ourselves and, in the process, restrict what God ultimately does with us.
  - ▶ This is passed to our children and others over whom we have influence and impact.
    - “You all press these children too hard.”
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# Ways the 12” Frying Pan Shows up in Our Lives

## 1. Lack of Trust

- ▶ Interestingly, often we seem to only want to trust when we are assured out of the outcome.
- ▶ That’s not trust, that’s an affirmation and does not expand our faith.
- ▶ Trust often involves a leap of faith.
- ▶ Hymnist – “*’Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus, just to take him at His word. . .*”

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Proverbs 3:5-6*



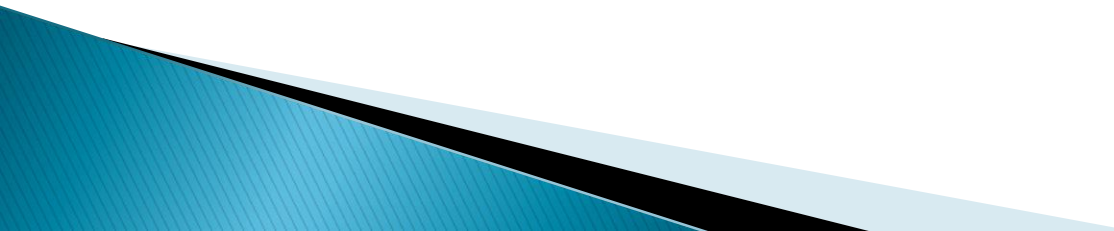


## 2. Leaning (Relying) on Ourselves to Excess

There are some things we must do for ourselves.

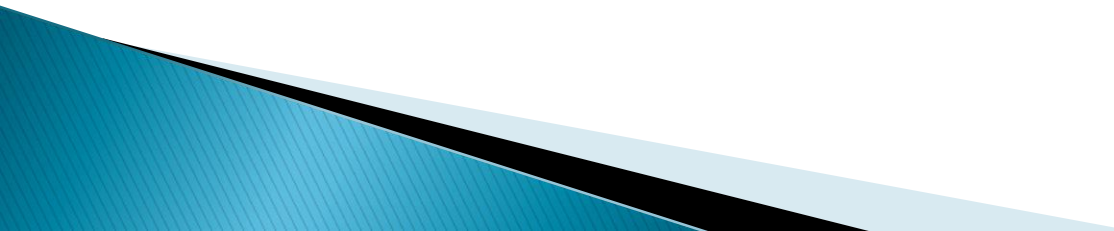
Obedience and commitment to God is an individual proposition.

The Bible exhorts each of us to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.  
Philippians 2:12



However, we must be careful not to rely “solely” on our contribution and strength.

It caps our potential because God can be left from the equation, and He has infinitely more strength, capacity, resources, and power than we will ever be able to even imagine.



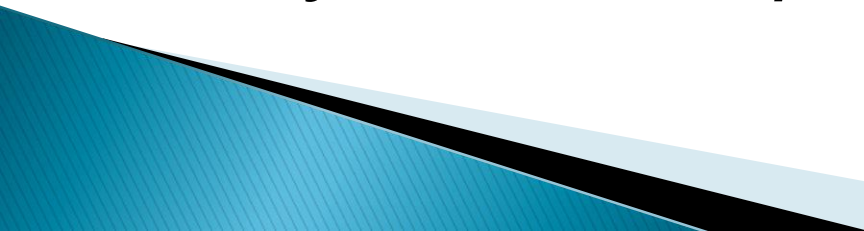
### 3. Living Off Feelings and on Emotion

- ▶ We all have feelings and emotions. Many times they fuel our impulse responses and incubate fear, doubt and skepticism.
- ▶ Sometimes easy to get caught in our feelings – be careful because in doing so we can wreck relationships, say or do something we will regret for a long time, or, more relevant to today's discussion, put God in a box.
- ▶ I really believe that this is what happened when the twelve spies surveyed Canaan and took one look at the physical stature of the inhabitants. See Numbers 13

## 4. The Presence of Sin

*Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. <sup>2</sup> But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear. **Isaiah 59:1-2***

*Truly, these times of ignorance, God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent. **Acts 17:30***



If there were ever a time we (mankind) needed the Lord, certainly it is now →

**PLEASE DO NOT LIMIT GOD'S  
POWER IN YOUR LIFE!**



# Lord's Invitation Extended to All

- ▶ **Be added to the Lord's body**

Hear the gospel (Acts 15:7; I  
Corinthians 15:1–4)

Believe (Acts 15:7; Rom. 10:17)

Repent (Acts 2:38)

Confess (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:10)

Be baptized (Acts 2:38, 8:38)

# Lord's Invitation (cont'd)

- ▶ **Be reconciled unto the Lord (1 John 1:8–9); or**
- ▶ **Desire prayer (James 5:16).**