

## Talents of Silver

2 Kings 5

When Naaman was healed of his leprosy by bathing in the Jordan River he offered the prophet Elisha a generous reward. Elisha refused this bonus. However, his servant Gehazi could not resist the temptation to accept it. Why was this?

During the time of Elisha and Naaman people did not use coins for trading as we do today. Our coins have a symbolic value. This means that the metal from which coins are made is of far less value than the amount each coin is worth. This is particularly true for bills, which have even less than coins.

However, in Elisha and Naaman's time the weight of a precious metal determined its value. Therefore, a person's wealth was determined by the weight of gold and silver they possessed or the value of their other possessions in those weights. For example, a person might have a chariot worth one talent of silver—about 90 pounds (40kg) of silver.

The two talents of silver that Naaman gave to Gehazi would have been about one cubic foot (0.02 m<sup>3</sup>) in size and each would have weighed around 90 pounds (40kg). Together they would be worth about \$50,000 today. Back then, they would have been even more valuable. They could have purchased hundreds more goods and services than they could today, making them worth about \$50,000,000.00 in goods and services now.

- Using this information, compare the use of talents to the use of money today. Which is most practical, most likely to remain valuable, etc.
- How difficult would it have been for Gehazi to transport and hide the silver he received from Naaman?
- Now that you know the value of Naaman's gift, do you think you would have been able to resist accepting it?