

## Daily Devotional, February 9, 2021 Giving My All to God

***Elisha said, "Get a bow and some arrows," and he did so. "Take the bow in your hands," he said to the king of Israel. When he had taken it, Elisha put his hands on the king's hands. "Open the east window," he said, and he opened it. "Shoot!" Elisha said, and he shot. "The Lord's arrow of victory, the arrow of victory over Aram!" Elisha declared. "You will completely destroy the Arameans at Aphek." Then he said, "Take the arrows," and the king took them. Elisha told him, "Strike the ground." He struck it three five or six times; then you would have defeated Aram and completely destroyed it. But now you will defeat it only three times." 2 Kings 13:15-19 (NIV)***

When I was young, even into my early teens, I played in organized baseball leagues. Mostly, I played second base, but occasionally I would switch to an outfield position. mostly center field because I was a speedy little bugger and could cover more ground. Although I was far from being a superstar, I had a lot of fun, and I always gave the game my very best effort. One could say I was extremely intense.

After all these years, one particular game still stands out in my mind. I was in the familiar position of centerfield when a long fly ball was hit over my head. I turned backward and ran as fast as I could, pushing with every muscle in my body to position myself so I could snag that ball. At the last moment I reached out as far as I could, and — wonder of wonders — I caught it! Of all the surprised people on the field that day, I undoubtedly was the most surprised of all! A ball that I thought was out of reach landed in the extended webbing of my glove.

Amazing things can happen when we give our best. In our text today, however, King Joash did not give that kind of effort. Joash was visiting the Prophet Elisha, who was on his death bed, and Elisha instructed the king to do a couple of unusual things. First, they together shot an arrow out of an open window at the palace. Elisha explained that this was prophetic of how God would deliver the Israelites from their oppressors, the Syrians. Next, Joash was instructed to take a handful of arrows and hit them against the ground, symbolic of Israel defeating Syria. Instead of following through vigorously, however, Joash responded in a half-hearted manner. By responding in this way, he forfeited the opportunity to win long-lasting victory over Syria. Israel would win some particular victories, but long-term peace would be denied them.

Today, we can learn a lesson from Joash's half-heartedness. Whatever God asks us to do, let us be sure to do it with all of our heart and with all of our strength. Let's not stop with a superficial effort, but invest ourselves wholeheartedly! We will receive God's blessing for seizing that golden opportunity and speaking up at the right time, or for remaining on our knees in prayer a little longer—until the answer comes!

Our best may not seem like much, but it is of great value in God's eyes! Let us determine today to give it to God in whatever we do. In the long run, we will be glad that we did.

***Dear Lord, May I praise you with my life. All that I have and am, is a gift that I offer you today. When I give you my time, you give me eternity. When I give you my gifts and talents, you pour spiritual treasures into my soul. When I give of my earthly treasure, an everlasting treasure awaits me in your kingdom. What peace I have in you. In you I have my hope, and my hope will never be in vain. All glory be to you, Father. Amen.***