

**II. Group discussion** *Each number below includes a set of questions that relate to the scripture text. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better. Save time for "the big question."*

Read II Kings 6:8-23 aloud.

1. What was happening to the king of Aram as he went to war with Israel? *Elisha was tipping the Israelites about Aramean plans.*

How did the king of Aram think the Israelites knew his plans?  
*He believed there was an Israelite spy in his ranks.*

What did he decide to do with the Elisha problem?

Can you see a flaw in sending the army to capture Elisha?  
*Why send the army to capture a guy who knew the army's plans?*

2. How surprised was Elisha's servant to see the Arameans around Dothan?

What was going through this man's head when he saw the armies?  
*Fear & panic -- A slight resemblance to Barney Fife?*

Why was Elisha unafraid of the Aramean threat?

Why did Elisha see things His servant could not see?

3. Who were some people who could not see in this story?  
*Elisha's servant (15), Aramean army (18), king of Israel (21).*

By the end of the story, how had everyone's eyes been opened?  
Elisha's servant?  
Aramean army?  
King of Israel?

How do you think the Aramean soldiers felt when their eyes were opened and they were surrounded by Israelite troops?

4. Instead of killing the Arameans, what did the king of Israel do?  
*Fed them.*

What happened to the relations between Israel & Aram after this feast?

What would have happened to the relations between Israel & Aram if the Israelite king had killed the Arameans?

5. How does this story illustrate Jesus' principle of the merciful receiving mercy?

What does it mean to be merciful?

*To treat a person well in spite of his or her past actions. To focus on potential rather than the past. To value a person as a precious child of God, even when his or her behavior has been costly and foolish.*

How does God's mercy encourage you to be merciful?

When a relationship is strained or tense, who should go first at being merciful – you or the other person? What could happen if you wait on that other person to be merciful?

*With most conflicts, both parties feel they have been mistreated. If you are nursing a grudge and waiting on the other person to apologize, it may not ever happen. "I will be merciful only after you are merciful" is relational suicide.*

6. What are the risks of being merciful? Why would you be merciful if this is the case?

Same question, different form – your 17 year-old drove too fast and totaled a car. He needs a car for school. What do you do? In what ways are you merciful? In what ways do you lay down the law?

† **The big question** *If you ask only one question, let this be it. Allow at least 20 minutes. Go around the circle and give each person an opportunity to answer. It's okay if they pass, but at least they get a chance to respond.*

What is a relationship where you need to show mercy to someone?

### III. Other resources

**The point** – Go first when it comes to showing mercy – don't wait for the other person to be merciful.

#### **Prayer ideas**

Thank God for his mercy.

Thank God for someone who has shown you mercy.

Offer a prayer of blessing on someone who frustrates you.

Pray for God to guide the Lockes, our leaders and our congregation through the preacher transition.

**Kid-friendly activity.** *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

Who do you know who is blind?

Act out II Kings 6:8-23 – maybe even eat your snack when you get to the meal at the end.

Who were some people who could not see in this story?  
*Elisha's servant (15), Aramean army (18), king of Israel (21).*

By the end of the story, how had everyone's eyes been opened?  
Elisha's servant?  
Aramean army?  
King of Israel?

Instead of killing the Arameans, what did the king of Israel do?  
*Fed them.*

What happened to the relations between Israel & Aram after this feast?

What is a situation that makes you angry?

How does anger blind us? How does mercy help us see the other person as a person?

## **LIFE Group Guide**

### **II Kings 6 – Being merciful and receiving mercy**

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

The theme: **Giving and enjoying mercy.**

Jim Woodroof is continuing his sermon series on Matthew 5, and this week he talks about the merciful receiving mercy. This LG guide will help your group look at a real-life situation where this principle proved true – showing mercy brought relief and peace to everyone.

It's a long story, so be sure you leave time to hit questions 6 & 7 and the Big Question. Those are the ones that tie in with Sunday's sermon.

Leadership tip: Laughter is the best sound your group can enjoy. It is therapeutic, and it draws people closer together. Cultivate a positive, upbeat, even playful spirit within your group.

**I. Relate** *Use a few to introduce the theme, check everyone's spiritual pulse, and "break the ice." No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage through these questions.*

- ❖ The worst thing about my belly-button is...  
*I know – this is one of my all-time goofiest questions. But you'll be amazed how well it works! Go around the circle & ask everyone to respond.*
- ❖ Who is someone we could invite to our group next time?
- ❖ What is a situation where you feel overwhelmed and you would like to know God is working to help you through it?