



Healing



by
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Healing is a subject that has been subjected to much error, abuse and misunderstanding. I have seen many of God's people become overwhelmed with self-condemnation, despair and bitterness towards God due to an ignorance of Biblical teaching on sickness and healing. Many of God's people are confused about what to do or not do in times of sickness. I do not pretend to know everything there is to know about healing, but I have found some clear truths revealed in the Bible that give me peace and direction in times of pain and disease. It is my desire that others will also come to know this peace in their times of testing in the area of physical ailments.

Does God heal today?

The clear and simple answer to that question is a resounding, yes, God can and does heal His people today of physical pain and disease. There has never been a time or dispensation in which God has not manifested His power by miraculously healing certain individuals. Before we consider the history of God's healing of broken bodies down through the ages, we should remember that He created everything from nothing and then created the first human body from the dust of the earth. That Almighty Creator is our Heavenly Father. We cannot believe the Creation account and at the same time doubt the power of God to heal these mortal bodies.

God miraculously gave strength to the aged and long infertile body of Sarah to give birth to Isaac. (*Genesis 17—21*) Jehovah delivered those of Israel who looked on His provision of the bronze serpent from the certain death of the

bite of the fiery serpents in the wilderness. (*Numbers 21*) Elisha was used of God to raise a young boy from the dead. (*II Kings 4*) King Hezekiah was raised off his death bed by God's gracious and divine intervention. (*Isaiah 38*) These are, of course, only to mention a few from the Old Testament.

When we come to the New Testament, we read of countless (*John 21:25*) healings performed by our Lord during His ministry and by His disciples after the Lord's ascension. (*Acts 5:15*) The Apostle Paul's ministry was also characterized by numerous demonstrations of God's power to heal the sick. (*Acts 19:11, 12*)

It would be foolish to assume that God would all of a sudden completely abstain from miraculously healing His people during the last days of this Church Age unless He had specifically revealed that such miracles were to cease. Nowhere do we read in the Bible that such miracles were to cease in the final days of the Church Age. On the contrary, the Bible teaches us that He has made provision for healing for members of the body of Christ. Among the gifts of the Spirit listed in *I Corinthians 12* are the gifts of healing given for the good of the Body of Christ. Contrary to the unfounded insistence of many fundamentalists, these gifts are never said to cease before the end of the Church Age.

Why would God give gifts of healing to certain ones if He was not planning on manifesting His power by way of physical healing? Though there are many frauds and deceivers in Christendom today that fabricate healings, genuine, proven miracles of healing are reported among God's people all around the world.

I believe God wants us to ask for and seek His divine, miraculous intervention for our bodies when we are sick or afflicted. "*Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.*" **James 5:13-14**

James also taught that many times we fail to receive the blessings and miracles God has for us simply because we fail to ask Him. “*You have not because you ask not.*” **James 4:2** May we never miss out on a miracle from God because we have failed to ask Him for such a miracle.

We are to be anxious for nothing, but make our request known to God. (**Philippians 4:6**) Nothing seems to bring us more anxiety than our physical health or lack of it. We should not hesitate to request the Lord’s healing of our body. He is able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all that we ask or think. (**Ephesians 3:20**) I would have to think that would include physical healing when He so chooses.

Healing is simply one of the many provisions of the work of the cross of Jesus Christ. “*He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*” **Romans 8:32** Whatever we need, spirit soul or body, to be successful in the will of God and to enter into the fullness of His Grace in this life and the life to come, we are promised that it will be supplied by the One who freely gave us His Son to die for our sins. Again, I have to conclude that if I need a physical healing to have the will of God worked in me and/or through me, God will miraculously intervene and heal my body.

Is it God’s will to heal every believer, every time they become ill? Has He given an unconditional promise of healing to His people?

The scriptural answer to these questions is, no. The Bible does not teach that God will always heal every Christian if they only have enough faith. It is not always the will of God to miraculously deliver His people from the pain and suffering of disease in this life. Our redemption certainly includes full and final deliverance from disease and death, but that will only be a reality for all of God’s people at the resurrection. (**Revelation 21**)

Some of the Scriptures that are quoted to support the idea that every Christian who exercises faith is promised healing are from the Old Testament. Many of those are references to God's cure for sin, not physical disease. One of the most quoted verses used to establish the doctrine of unconditionally promised healing is a good example of a verse taken out of context. "*But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*" **Isaiah 53:5** Peter cites this verse in **I Peter 2:24** In both passages the spiritual sickness of sin is the subject, not disease of the physical body. In other words, I can know that I have been delivered once and for all from the guilt and penalty of sin based on the declaration of **Isaiah 53:5**, but I cannot claim that the passage gives me the promise of never being sick or of always being healed.

The Bible, especially in the Old Testament, often uses language to describe spiritual healing from sin and its consequences that could also be used to describe healing from physical disease. (**Isaiah 1:2—6**) Such language is used to draw an analogy. Sin is to the soul of man, what disease is to the body. Disease weakens, destroys and kills the body. Sin brings corruption and death to the soul and spirit of man. The condition of the soul in turn affects every other aspect of our existence. The description of sin and sickness are almost interchangeable. They are certainly directly related. Sin brought sickness and death to the human race. The full and final cure for physical disease is found in the cure for sin.

Atonement for sin and the provision for physical healing in this Church Age both resulted from the work of Jesus on the cross, but they are not to be considered to be one and the same provision. Some describe all that was accomplished at Calvary as the atoning work. I believe it more accurate to see the atonement for our sin (a sacrifice to appease the One offended by sin and to bring reconciliation) as one of the

many works accomplished by the death of our Lord. The sacrifice of Christ on the cross accomplished and provided many things for us. The work of the cross is actually many works. Atonement for sin is only one of the works of the cross. Redemption, justification and sanctification are a few others. Obviously, you cannot completely separate them from one another since they were all accomplished by the same sacrifice, but they are different aspects of the work of Christ on the cross. This is why God ordained several different kinds of sacrifices in the Old Testament. They were types of different aspects of the one sacrifice that was to come.

There are blessings that all believers enjoy upon putting their faith in Jesus Christ. Some of these blessing include, forgiveness of sins, justification, eternal life and regeneration. Other blessings are contingent on the will of God for each individual in each situation. They are not universally promised or experienced by all believers all the time. These blessings fall under the category of *Philippians 4:19*. “*My God shall all your need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*” Whatever we “need” to glorify the Lord, God will supply based on the wealth of the person and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Those needs vary from person to person and situation to situation, but the provision of what we need, when we need it is a provision or work of the cross.

The atonement for sin is once for all and its power to deliver us from the sentence of spiritual, eternal death is immediately, personally experienced by **all** who believe when they believe. The blessing of physical healing in this life is only experienced by those for whom it is God’s will to heal in order to accomplish His will in and through that individual in a particular situation. In some believers, God’s will is accomplished by the supernatural grace to endure physical affliction while continuing to serve and honor Him with their words, attitude and actions. (*II Corinthians 12:9, 10*)

As a result of our atonement provided for us by the death

of Christ, all believers will ultimately be delivered from all the effects of sin on these bodies. (*I Corinthians 15:51*) The bodies of all believers, at the last trumpet of the resurrection, will put on immortality because atonement was made for our sins on the cross. But physical healing in this life is not guaranteed to all of us all the time by the sacrifice of Christ. However, it is provided to those whom God wills to receive it on the basis of the finished work of the cross that has supplied us with everything we need to bring God the highest glory now and in eternity.

The large volume of miracles of healing seen in the ministries of Jesus and the disciples does not establish that it is God's will that every believer be healed without exception. Jesus was offering the kingdom to the nation of Israel. The Kingdom age of a thousand years, the millennium, will be characterized by mass healings. (*Isaiah 35:5, 6*) Also, as was the case with the many miracles that characterized Paul's ministry, they were evidences of the divine commission given them to announce the Gospel of Jesus Christ. (*Mark 16:20*) The miracles made people stop and take notice that their message was not ordinary, but supernatural. Some stood still long enough to hear and believe the message of God's redemption from sin and were made whole spiritually and eternally. Yet others, having seen and heard of the many miracles died in their sins and unbelief. (*John 12:37*) The many miracles performed by the Lord had no lasting benefit for those who rejected the real message of the Gospel.

Today some make the healing of these physical bodies the main emphasis of their doctrine and present it as the primary blessing of the Gospel. Such teaching is a corruption of the Gospel and distracts from the real hope of the Gospel which is Christ in us the hope of a future, eternal glory. (*Colossians 1:25—27*) That hope of glory is given to us on the basis of the finished work of the cross of Jesus Christ where He redeemed us from sin and gave us eternal

life. This Gospel hope causes us to focus our love and ambitions on things above and not on the things of this life. (*Colossians 3:1—4*) When we understand the fullness of the hope of our calling, (*Ephesians 1:18*) it will cause us to be heavenly minded.

We know by the Word that this physical life on earth is like a passing vapor. (*James 4:14*) God is faithful to supply what we need in this short life, but He always deals with us with eternity in mind. Therefore, our focus is to be on the health of our spiritual life infinitely more than on our physical health. The present suffering is not worthy to be compared with the future glory. (*II Corinthians 4:16—18 / Romans 8:18*)

Any doctrine that causes us to focus on and value the supply of our physical and material needs in this life more than our eternal riches found in Christ is contrary to the teaching of the Bible. Any doctrine that causes us to be preoccupied with this life rather than with purifying ourselves spiritually in anticipation of the soon return of Jesus Christ is a doctrine of demons. (*I John 3:1—3 / I Timothy 4:1—16*)

Many scriptures are quoted from the four Gospels and Jesus' ministry in support of the belief that God's people are never to be sick and that if we will simply exercise faith, we will always be healed. Jesus declared that His earthly ministry was directed to the lost sheep of the nation of Israel. (*Matthew 15:24*) He was offering them the promised earthly kingdom in which He would reign in peace and righteousness. In *Matthew 8:16, 17* it says that Jesus healed all that were sick in fulfillment of *Isaiah 53:4*. If Jesus' ministry as recorded in *Matthew 8* is to be the pattern for every believer's ministry, we should be able to empty out every hospital bed in the world. It simply is not God's plan to make heaven here on earth. (*II Peter 3:10—14*)

Even the promises made to His disciples concerning their faith must always be understood in the light of the

whole of Scripture and specifically from the view of Paul's Gospel who received the full revelation of God's plans and purposes for this Church Age.

For example, **Mark 16:15—18** records the great commission that extends through this Church Age. Is Jesus saying that every true believer will have these signs and miracles follow them? If that were true, sickness and death would be eradicated from the earth. The promise is that, as a group, believers will have these miracles manifested in their midst as the Lord orders their individual lives and ministries. Paul asks a rhetorical question in **I Corinthians 12:30** that demands a negative response in the context of his teaching on the various responsibilities and value of the members of the Body of Christ. "*Have all the gifts of healing?*" Paul did not believe that every believer would have the power to heal anyone, anytime, anywhere. Yet, he taught that the gifts of healing should be in operation among the Body of Christ in this Church Age.

In every dispensation God has manifested His power to heal certain individuals when such a healing brought about His plans and purposes. But in every dispensation there have also been men and women of faith who did not receive physical healing when their bodies were suffering pain or disease. Isaac and Jacob both suffered with blindness in their old age. (**Genesis 27:1 / 48:10**) We know that they had faith because they are recorded in **Hebrews 11** as examples of those who lived by faith. If we count up the miracles recorded in the Scriptures that were performed by Elijah and Elisha, we find that Elisha performed twice as many miracles as Elijah and yet we read that he died as the result of sickness. (**II Kings 13:14**) Did he not have enough faith? King David suffered with poor circulation in his old age. (**I Kings 1:1**) Even the Apostle of this Church Age was helpless to secure the healing of one of his helpers. (**II Timothy 4:20**) Paul had been used by God to perform many miracles of healing on others. He himself was restored to

life after having been left for dead after being stoned. (*Acts 14:19, 20*) On another occasion he suffered what should have been a lethal bite from a viper and was unaffected by the poison. (*Acts 28:3—6*) Yet, he suffered from a physical ailment that God refused to remove from his body. (*II Corinthians 12*) The reason is not because Paul didn't have enough faith for healing, but because God was working something in Paul's spiritual life which was far more important and eternal. Paul treasured that spiritual work much more than any physical healing.

We do not have any unconditional promise in God's Word that we will never be sick in this life, but we do have the blessed hope of one day being removed from the presence of sin and all of its consequences. (*I Corinthians 15 / Revelation 21*) There is coming a day for every believer in Jesus Christ when there will be no more pain, sorrow or death. Sin brought in disease and death and the Gospel has the answer to sin and all of its consequences, but we do not immediately enter into the fullness of our redemption in this life. In this life we enjoy many physical and material blessings one of which can include the healing of our body when it is the Lord's will, but we look forward to the day when the Lord returns to redeem His purchased possession. (*Ephesians 1:14*)

Is it wrong to go to doctors and seek the benefits, help and relief of medical science for our physical needs?

Those who believe that if you have enough faith you will always be healed, think it is a lack of faith to go to doctors when all you need is faith. But Scripture does not bear out the first leg of their doctrine, so their final conclusions must also be suspect.

Those who believe that miracles are not for today have denied the supernatural power of God and have only the human instruments to look to for help in times of physical

ailment. Their conclusions must also be rejected as based on unscriptural teaching.

I believe it is the clear teaching of the Bible that God does still heal today, but that He has not given an unconditional promise of healing to all of His children all of the time. There are those who agree with me on this point of doctrine, but who also believe that it is a lack of faith to go to doctors and avail themselves to the relief and comfort for their bodies that medical science may afford them when God chooses not to miraculously heal them. They believe that if it is the Lord's will to heal them, they will be healed. They also believe that if the Lord chooses not to heal them, that it is then sin to seek any human comfort or relief that may be found in medical science. They feel that somehow it hinders God from accomplishing His will in their life that He has ordained for them in and through the trial. As a universal doctrine to be applied in all cases, I find this conclusion to be contrary to Scripture and has forced many of God's people to suffer needlessly.

Let's establish some Scriptural truths that will serve as a foundation on which to build a sound understanding of the Biblical teaching on healing and whether or not it is sin to go to doctors.

"...whatsoever is not of faith is sin." **Romans 14:23**
"Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God."
Romans 10:17 The Bible reveals to us the will of God. Faith takes God at His Word and obeys. If the Bible tells us that it is sin to go to doctors and we disobey and go anyway, that is sin. But if the Bible does not prohibit the consulting of doctors and the practice of known remedies for the comfort and healing of these bodies, then such actions cannot be declared sin or lack of faith.

God looks at the heart. He desires to see a heart that is fully surrendered to Him and fully dependent on His direction and wisdom for every area of our life. If an individual fails to trust God for His health and life and instead puts his trust in the wisdom and help of doctors, that

individual has sinned against God. “*And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians.*” **2 Chronicles 16:12** This commentary on King Asa is not a prohibition against doctors, but a rebuke of the king’s failure to seek the Lord at all on the matter. His hope and trust were in the physicians instead of in God.

To say that the rebuke of Asa trusting in doctors is the same as a prohibition of the practice of medical science is a wrong conclusion. That would be the same as saying that Paul’s warning to the rich in **I Timothy 6:17** not to trust in uncertain riches is a prohibition of the possession of money or any material goods. It is not a sin to be rich. It is a sin to seek your hope, peace and joy in those riches. It is not sin to benefit from the knowledge of physicians. It is sin to trust them as the source of your health and life. God is looking for individuals who understand that human efforts apart from submission to the direction and anointing of God are futile. “*Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.*” **Psalms 127:1-2** We cannot understand this verse to mean that it is sin to engage in the construction of buildings or in the proper security of our property. We can however take heed to the clear message that unless God orders, directs and blesses our efforts, they are vain. Therefore, we are to constantly seek the Lord’s direction and blessing and live to honor Him.

Medical science is simply the knowledge of the proper, healthy function of this body that God has created. Scripture exhorts us to practice good hygiene and to take steps to prevent disease and poor health. (**Deut. 23:12, 13**) The Bible encourages us to take steps for ourselves, apart from miraculous intervention, to promote the health of our bodies. Much of the dietary and ceremonial laws of Moses, besides

being types of spiritual truths, had practical, physical benefits to the children of Israel's health and general well-being. Circumcision is known to be an effective deterrent to infections and various cancers. The prohibition of pork in the Jewish diet kept them from many diseases that resulted from the contaminated pork of that day and region. The prohibition against drunkenness and immorality have both spiritual and physical benefits for the believer today. Godliness is a healthy life-style.

We have several examples in Scripture where the practice and application of basic medical knowledge is applied with God's blessing. In **Luke 10:34** we read that the Good Samaritan in Jesus' parable bandaged the injuries of the wounded man and poured oil and wine on his wounds. This was the basic first aide of the day to avoid infection and promote healing and Jesus points to its practice and application by the Samaritan as part of this man's compassion and genuine love.

Paul exhorts Timothy to take some practical steps to cure his chronic stomach ailments due to bad water in **1 Timothy 5:23** In N.T. times the wine was highly diluted with water. Pure wine made up only one third to one fourth of the total mixture. (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.) The small amount of alcohol present in much of the diluted wine of that day was just enough to effectively kill many bacteria and parasites. Paul's advice to Timothy was medicinal. God had not chosen to protect Timothy from chronic stomach infirmities, but Paul did not feel that he was annulling God's work in Timothy's life by encouraging him to apply scientific means to avoid the suffering of the unpleasant stomach ailments caused by bad water.

Truly these bodies are fearfully and wonderfully made by God. (**Psalm 139:14**) Whatever we can do to promote the body's natural ability to heal itself honors God who made these bodies. In **Acts 16:30 – 34** Paul allowed his wounds to be washed. Why? For the promotion of healing

and prevention of infection. He did not feel that if God did not immediately, miraculously make his wounds disappear, that he was to not to avail himself to the comfort and aide of the non-supernatural things that were known to promote healing.

Paul refers to Luke as the beloved physician in ***Colossians 4:14***. He is not condemned for his profession and obviously he did not abandon his profession upon being saved. I don't think it unreasonable to conclude that he practiced his profession on other Christians including possibly the Apostle Paul.

Somehow many believers have come to the conclusion that when it comes to the healing of our bodies, God has only chosen to use the miraculous to bring His people comfort and healing. Some dogmatically proclaim that it is a lack of faith to think that God would possibly use any natural or human instrument to minister to this area of need. If God does not heal miraculously, then we must assume that He intends for us to suffer to the fullest degree that our ailment dictates. But we do not apply that standard of faith to any other area of our life. Faith for our material needs accepts any instrument God chooses to use. *"My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."* ***Philippians 4:19*** This promise doesn't mean that God will always supply our financial needs by way of an unexplained miracle. God can and does many times supply finances from unexpected and unexplained sources for those in need, but that doesn't mean that if He doesn't, we shouldn't look to Him to supply a job and strength to do that job in order that we might pay our bills.

To think that if we avail ourselves to medical science for the health of our bodies, we do not give God an opportunity to heal us, is as flawed an idea as to think that if I go to work, I'm not giving God an opportunity to meet my material needs by way of a miracle. Going to doctors cannot annul God's plans either for healing or the spiritual work He

desires to do in us through the test if we look to Him in faith for direction and wisdom for every decision in our life.

I believe it is possible to be led by God not to seek any medical help at all or to be led to avail yourself to medical assistance in a limited way in a particular situation. But to make abstention from the aide of medical science a general rule of life and doctrine is unscriptural and is to tempt God. It is to jump off a cliff and demand God to catch you. If God tells you to jump off the cliff, you had better jump. If He has not told you to jump, you had better stay away from the edge. (*Matthew 4:7*) Seek God's direction for your physical health. If after seeking Him, you are not prohibited by the Spirit to avail yourself to the relief or comfort of some remedy or procedure, apply the remedy or procedure and trust God for the outcome. Your peace and joy come from knowing that He is in control and that however the matter concludes it will be for your eternal well-being.

There is another major flaw in the thinking that it is a lack of faith to avail yourself to the aide of medical science. If medical science is inherently sinful, then all such knowledge is sinful. I have never known anyone who has claimed to believe that it is a lack of faith to go to doctors who has never benefited or applied some degree of medical knowledge for the health of their bodies. If you cut your arm and apply a bandage and pressure to stop the bleeding, you are benefiting from medical science. If you believe it's wrong to apply scientific means of healing, then you should not try to intervene and stop the bleeding at all. It will either stop or it won't. I'm not trying to be facetious, I'm only pointing out the flaw of rejecting medical science on the sole basis that it is a human form of healing instead of a miraculous one.

There are other inconsistencies by those who feel they are practicing abstinence from physicians as a general rule of life and doctrine. There are many who would feel it a lack of faith to have a cancer removed surgically who do not hesitate

to go to the dentist when they have a tooth ache. You can die from a tooth related infection just as easily as you can from cancer. Treatment of tooth infections and of cancer are both procedures that are products of medical science that God has allowed man to attain. If you are going to automatically reject the one, you must reject the other. The fact is, both procedures should be prayed about. If God does not specifically prohibit either procedure by the leading of the Spirit, then it is not sin or displeasing to God. God may give liberty to do one and not the other. The rule and doctrine is to trust in God for wisdom and direction and to rest that the outcome is in His hands whichever way He may lead. (*Romans 8:28*)

Another common inconsistency is that of the wearing of eyeglasses by those who claim they always trust God for the physical needs of their body. Optometry is a branch of medical science. If you are going to reject medical science as a legitimate option for people of faith, you must also reject the benefits of optometry.

The list could go on to include everything from stitches to vitamins, but I think I've made my point.

We must seek God for our health and obey His instruction. Faith is to know that our health and life are in His hands. It is to know that to be absent from this body is to be present with the Lord and it is to know that our full and final deliverance from the sorrow of pain, disease and death is reserved for the day of resurrection when this corruptible will put on incorruption and immortality. Meanwhile, we seek God's direction for our day to day life and needs, spirit, soul and body.

Conclusion

This tract is not intended to encourage Christians to aggressively avail themselves to every and any medical intervention that might be available. We must ask God for wisdom in every decision and be ruled by the peace of God. (*Colossians 3:15*) Some medical options may be clearly ethically and morally wrong in the light of Scripture. Others, may simply not be the will of God for a certain individual in a certain circumstance. Each is responsible to find the mind of the Lord for his or her own life. We are not to cling to life at any and all cost motivated by the fear of death. We must be motivated by the truth “*for me to live is Christ and to die is gain.*” *Philippians 1:21*

However, I do not believe that we should assume that we are to suffer needlessly when there are remedies available through medical science. We should not refuse such remedies on the sole basis that they are made available by human instruments.

What I have intended to do with this tract is to point to the fact that the Bible teaches that God does still heal His people today and that we should ask Him for the healing of our bodies. The Bible, however, does not teach that it is a lack of faith to avail yourself to the aide of medical science. The Bible encourages common sense precautions and interventions concerning our health. (*Ephesians 5:29*) We are to seek God’s direction and wisdom as to our course of action in times of sickness and to realize that He can and does use many different instruments to minister to the need of His people. Sometimes He uses explainable, human instruments to bring health and healing to these bodies that He has created. Other times He may choose a supernatural, unexplainable miracle. Those who live by faith, rely on God’s leading for every decision and give Him the glory no matter in which direction He may lead them.

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October, 2001