

Healing Hands

A Message of Hope for the Sick

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to all who read it. May you prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.

THE BIBLE TELLS THE STORY of a man who was very sick with leprosy. Coming to Jesus, he knelt on the ground and implored the Master to heal him. When Jesus saw this man, He was moved with compassion and “stretched out His hand and touched him” (Mark 1:41). The man was instantaneously healed. Elsewhere the Bible says, “So He touched her hand, and the fever left her” (Matthew 8:15). It also records, “Then He touched their eyes, saying, According to your faith let it be to you” (Matthew 9:29).

Do you notice a pattern in these verses? Let’s continue on for a moment. The Bible also says, “Jesus came and touched them and said, Arise, and do not be afraid” (Matthew 17:7). Again it says, “So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight” (Matthew 20:34). Occasionally the sick person touched Jesus; for example, “She said to herself, If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well” (Matthew 9:21). And when word spread that contact with this man brought healing, the Bible says, “When the men of that place recognized Him, they sent out into all that surrounding region, brought to Him all who were sick, and begged Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched it were made perfectly well” (Matthew 14:35-36).



These verses show us plainly that Jesus Christ is infused with magnificent healing power—a power far superior to anything man has to offer. Furthermore, this power is readily available: it is as close as the touch of the Lord. To partake of it we must simply touch Him, or be touched by Him, for this is all that it takes to be completely healed. As a child of God, it is vital that you really believe this.

Our Savior is the same today as He was then. He can be moved with compassion just as easily as He was moved during the days of His flesh. Do you believe He's concerned about the condition of your body? Do you believe His desire is to touch you and heal you? If you are to be healed by Christ, then you must believe it is His will to heal you; for faith is what moves the Lord, and faith begins with knowing the will of God.

Are you struggling to believe that it's really God's will for you to be healed?

Nearly everyone believes that God is able to heal. After all, He is God. He can do anything. But what many people struggle to believe is that God actually will heal them. Even many of His own children are doubtful in this matter. Let us remember, however, that when we petition God for anything, including physical healing, we must ask in faith, nothing doubting; for the Bible says that the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind: "Let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord" (James 1:7).

If you are struggling to believe that it is really God's will for you to be healed, then you may be concentrating too much on your illness and not enough on Christ. You must get your mind off your condition and onto the One who heals. You must believe without wavering that it is absolutely, positively the will of God for you to be healed.

But how can you know this with certainty, you ask? The same way you know anything else about God—the Bible. You need to see for yourself what the Bible has to say about healing? So let's begin by looking in the Old Testament.

God promised healing and good health to Israel.

The first promise God made to the children of Israel after they passed through the Red Sea was that He would keep them free from disease. He told them that if they would diligently heed His voice and do what is right in His sight, giving ear to His commandments and keeping all His statutes, then He would put none of the diseases upon them which He had brought upon the Egyptians. "For I am the LORD who heals you," He declared (Exodus 15:26). In the original language, the word "heal" means "to mend, to cure, to repair, or to make whole." The same word is used in Psalm 103 where David extols the Lord who "forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases" (v.3). The Lord is the One who makes His children whole.

After leading the Israelites to Mt. Sinai where He established the first covenant and gave them the Law, the Lord again promised, "So you shall serve the Lord your God, and He will bless your bread and your water. And I will take sickness away from the midst of you" (Exodus 23:25). Then, forty years later as the children of Israel were about to enter into the Promised Land, God reaffirmed this great promise by saying, "Therefore you shall keep the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which I command you today, to observe them... And the Lord will take away from you all sickness, and will afflict you with none of the terrible diseases of Egypt which you have known" (Deuteronomy 7:11, 15). There are no guarantees for the unbeliever and the half-hearted, but for those who are totally committed to the Lord, there is an absolute promise of good health.

What then can we say of God's promise? First of all, we can say that His promise is sure. God cannot and will not lie. Not one of His words has ever failed. Every promise He makes to His people is a sure thing. Though heaven and earth may pass away, God's Word will never pass away. It is forever settled in heaven.

The second thing we must note, however, is that the promise of healing is conditional; the fulfillment is not automatic. God does not magically heal irrespective of the ailing person's spiritual condition. God's promise of healing is totally dependent upon the faith, submission, and obedience of the sick person.

Why would a good and loving God afflict His own children with terrible sicknesses and diseases?

The answer is, chastisement. Or better yet, the answer is, love. Have you forgotten the exhortation that speaks to you as a son of God? “My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives” (Hebrews 12:5-6).

It is clear that the failure to heed God’s voice and to live by His statutes invites affliction and delays healing, for the Lord also told the Israelites, “If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, THE LORD YOUR GOD, then the Lord will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary plagues; great and prolonged plagues; and serious and prolonged sicknesses. Moreover He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt, of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you. Also every sickness and every plague, which is not written in this Book of the Law, will the Lord bring upon you until you are destroyed” (Deuteronomy 28:58-61). This sobering passage informs us that if we or our children are sick and are showing no signs of improving, the problem is not with God—it is with us!

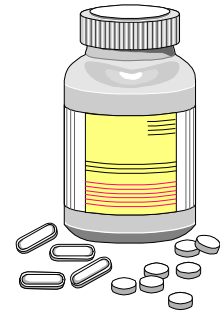
Chastening is not the act of a cruel and malicious God; it is the correction of a kind and loving heavenly Father. King David was said to be a man after God’s own heart; yet he wrote, “The Lord has chastened me severely” (Psalm 118:18). He did not complain, however, but instead testified, “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your word” (Psalm 119:67). He considered his chastisement to have been a positive thing, saying, “It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes” (Psalm 119:71). Are you willing to respond to the Lord’s chastening by learning His statutes? This may be all that He is seeking to accomplish in you.

How does God chasten His people? There are many ways He may do it, but Job says, “Man is also chastened with pain on his bed, and with strong pain in many of his bones, so that his life abhors bread, and his soul succulent food. His flesh wastes away from sight, and his bones stick out which once were not seen” (Job 33:19-21). This passage clearly teaches that God uses

physical disease to chasten His people.

David also wrote, "Fools, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, were afflicted. Their soul abhorred all manner of food, and they drew near to the gates of death. Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distresses. He sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions" (Psalm 107:17-20). God is faithful. If we cry out to Him in the midst of our sickness and are willing to change in whatever way He determines is needful, if we submit ourselves wholeheartedly to His will and His Word, then we can count on Him to send His healing Word and restore us to perfect soundness.

Where is the biblical authorization for doctors and medicine?



So far we have only examined God's promise of healing as it was established and fulfilled in the Old Testament. Clearly it was a significant element of the first covenant and had a practical application in the lives of God's people. On the basis of His promise, they knew they could petition Him for healing and that He would respond. Before we move to the New Testament, however, let's examine two more crucial questions concerning healing: 1) Did God work through doctors or physicians to bring about healing? and 2) Did God use medicine to bring about healing?

In 2 Chronicles 16:12 we read, "And in the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa became diseased in his feet, and his malady was severe; yet in his disease he did not seek the Lord, but the physicians." The next verse says, "So Asa rested with his fathers." Only the Lord knows what might have happened if Asa had sought Him. How many of us give lip service to the Lord, all the while fully intending to do whatever our doctor prescribes, regardless of its scriptural validity?

Is there any verse in the Bible that explicitly authorizes a Christian to seek advice from a medical doctor, to submit to surgery, or to take prescription drugs? Some say that Proverbs 17:22 endorses the use of medicine. It reads, "A merry heart does good, like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the

bones." The NIV translates it this way, "A cheerful heart is good medicine." The Amplified Bible says, "A happy heart is a good medicine and a cheerful mind works healing." The Hebrew word translated "medicine" simply means "a cure." In other words, what this verse is saying is that the way to be cured is to have a merry, cheerful, happy heart, which is contrasted with a broken spirit. A heart that is not right toward God, that is broken by sin and defiance of God's Word, is never a happy heart. Proverbs 15:30 says, "The light of the eyes rejoices the heart, and a good report makes the bones healthy." What light dwells in the eyes of your understanding? How good is the Lord's report on you?

Certainly Proverbs 17:22 is no endorsement of the taking of medicine. To the contrary, it teaches the necessity of having your heart right toward God. In Jeremiah 8:22 the Lord asks, "Is there no balm in Gilead, is there no physician there? Why then is there no recovery for the health of the daughter of my people?" The answer was not that there were no doctors or drugs available, for Gilead was known for its healing balm. The real problem was this: "They are not valiant for the truth on the earth. For they proceed from evil to evil, and they do not know Me, says the Lord" (Jeremiah 9:3).

In Jeremiah 30:13 the prophet laments, "There is no one to plead your cause, that you may be bound up; you have no healing medicines." Why were there no healing medicines? In the verse that follows, the Lord says, "I have wounded you with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one, for the multitude of your iniquities, because your sins have increased." When a person is not right with God, it doesn't matter what medicines he takes. It is true that some drugs may offer a temporary escape from the Lord's chastening rod by palliating the symptoms or suppressing the pain for a while, but if there is any unrighteousness in your heart that God is determined to correct, then hear what He says, "Go up to Gilead and take balm, O virgin, the daughter of Egypt; in vain you will use many medicines; you shall not be cured" (Jeremiah 46:11).

God has a gift for you!

The Bible teaches that the first covenant has become obsolete, having been replaced by a better covenant, established on better promises (Hebrews 8:6,13). This new covenant was not initiated by the blood of animals, but by

the blood of Jesus Christ, the spotless Lamb of God. It provides a better hope than the first because now, by the power of the indwelling Spirit, we can be transformed into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

To be like Jesus is God's purpose for every one of His children. Whenever we fail to progress toward this purpose as the Lord would have us, or when we disobey the principles or commandments of the Bible, either knowingly or unknowingly, we may end up bringing sickness upon ourselves. This is God's way of motivating us to seek Him in prayer. John linked our physical health with our spiritual growth when he wrote, "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers" (3 John 2). The word translated "prosper" means "to progress or to move along in one's journey." If you are not in good physical health, perhaps you would be wise to examine the health of your soul.

Paul tells us, "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?" (2 Corinthians 13:5). If you have really been born again, if Jesus Christ is really living within you, then you must be careful to maintain a lifestyle that is in harmony with both His nature and His will, as described in His Word. You may protest saying, "Well, my lifestyle and my soul are just fine, thank you." But let me ask you, are you conformed to the image of the Son of God in every way? Are you just like Jesus Christ in your every action, your every word, your every attitude and motive? If not, then perhaps you should focus your attention on moving a little further along in your spiritual journey. As you do, doubts will diminish and faith will grow. The Lord may then see fit to grant a restoration of health to your body. After all, the Lord is able to heal whenever He wants to. He is never the problem.

The link between the physical and the spiritual is demonstrated by the usage of the Greek word *sozo*, which is commonly translated "save." In Mark 5:23, Jesus was asked to lay His hands upon a sick girl, "that she may be healed [*sozo*]." In Ephesians 2:8, Paul writes that "by grace you have been saved [*sozo*] through faith," an obvious reference to salvation from sin. Therefore, when the Bible says that Jesus is "able to save [*sozo*] to the uttermost those who come to God through Him," it is saying that He can both save us from our sins and heal us of our diseases...to the uttermost! (Hebrews 7:25).

In the New Testament, healing is presented as a free gift from God, bestowed upon all who succeed in making contact with Jesus Christ. To be healed, one of two things must happen: either Jesus must touch you or you must touch Jesus. There is no other way given in the Scriptures. But if physical healing really is a free gift and really is so readily available to all God's children, then what is hindering your recovery?

The pages that follow will describe a number of factors which could be inhibiting you from being healed. As you read through them, respond either 'yes' or 'no' after each statement in the spaces provided. Ask the Lord to help you to honestly examine yourself as you read. Then take these hindrances to the Lord in prayer. Remember, the Bible says that the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much (James 5:16). It just could avail your complete healing.

Let's look for the hindrances to your being healed.

Ask yourself this question: How willing is God to heal you? Suppose you were to ask Him the same question the leper asked nearly two thousand years ago. Suppose you said, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." What do you suppose the Lord's answer would be? Do you think He would answer you any differently than He did the pitiful leper?

The Bible says Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed" (Matthew 8:2-3). Is there any reason He wouldn't answer you the same way? Perhaps we should note that before the leper made his appeal, the Bible says he worshiped Jesus, right there in front of everyone. Perhaps your unwillingness to worship Him before He actually heals you is hindering your recovery!

1. I have been worshiping the Lord with all my heart in spite of my condition.

G YES G NO

A short time later Jesus entered the home of Peter and found the disciple's mother-in-law lying sick in bed. The Bible says, "So He touched her hand, and the fever left her. And she arose and served them" (Matthew 8:15). If Jesus were to touch you right this instant and raise you up from your sick

bed, would you arise and go your own way? Or would you arise and serve Him as Peter's mother-in-law did? Remember, the Lord sees clearly what is in your heart. Perhaps your unwillingness to become His servant is hindering your recovery!

2. I am willing to serve the Lord in whatever way He desires.

G YES G NO

Later that evening, the people brought many who were demon-possessed to Jesus. The Bible says, "And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: 'He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses'" (Matthew 8:16a-17). This passage says that Jesus healed "all who were sick," not leaving anyone out. Perhaps the problem is that you have not actually come into the presence of Jesus Christ, and this is what is hindering your recovery!

3. I am striving to enter into the presence of the Lord every single day.

G YES G NO

On certain occasions during His earthly ministry, Jesus clearly took the initiative. For example, the Bible records the story of a great multitude of people who were waiting to be healed at the pool of Bethesda. But Jesus approached only one person, a man who had been crippled for thirty-eight years. He asked Him, "Do you want to be made well?" The man's response did not give any indication that he had any faith at all; yet Jesus said to the man, "Rise, take up your bed and walk" (John 5:1-9). And immediately he arose. Perhaps Jesus had recalled the words of Proverbs 16:24, which says, "Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones." The words of Jesus certainly brought strength to the bones of this crippled man, though Jesus later took the man aside and admonished him, saying, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you" (John 5:14b). Perhaps the inclination toward sin has yet to be eradicated from your heart, and this is what is hindering your recovery!

4. I have no secret desire to engage in some activity that would be displeasing to the Lord. My only desire is to live righteously in every way.

G YES G NO

The healing of this lame man can definitely be classified as a miracle. God reached out by His own volition and for His own purpose and instantaneously healed this man. But not all healings are instantaneous or miraculous. The vast majority are effected by the sick person taking the initiative and reaching out to Jesus. In either case, it is the touch of Jesus Christ that brings about the healing.

The Bible says, "Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people" (Matthew 9:35). Is anything too hard for the Lord? Apparently not, since this passage indicates that Jesus healed "every sickness and every disease." And what is amazing, it seems that He did it all without the help of one surgeon and without having to prescribe a single drug. Perhaps your fear that your illness is too serious for the Lord to handle on His own is what is hindering your recovery!

5. Regardless of the seriousness of my condition, I am absolutely convinced that Jesus Christ is willing and able to heal me.

G YES G NO

When the Lord saw that the multitudes were so large that He could not possibly minister to everyone by Himself, He called His twelve disciples together and "gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease" (Matthew 10:1b). In other words, He anointed them to operate the same healing power He was operating.

By the way, perhaps it would be helpful if we understood how to recognize an unclean spirit. According to the Bible, as Jesus was speaking in Capernaum, a man with an unclean spirit cried out, saying "Let us alone! What have we to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth?" (Mark 1:24a). The most conspicuous characteristic of an unclean spirit is that it wants Jesus to leave it alone. It doesn't want to be dealt with. It doesn't want to have to change. It doesn't want to have to acknowledge any shortcomings. It just wants to be

left alone. The Bible says, "A wise son heeds his father's instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke" (Proverbs 13:1). Perhaps your desire to be left alone indicates the influence of an unclean spirit, and that is what is hindering your recovery!

6. I never find myself wishing that the spiritual people who try to encourage me would just leave me alone. I want their counsel, and I will heed their instructions.

G YES G NO

At some point after He had sent out the twelve disciples to preach the gospel and heal the sick, Jesus appointed seventy more. He instructed them, saying, "And heal the sick who are there, and say to them, The kingdom of God has come near to you" (Luke 10:9). The healing of the sick through the power of Christ is the manifestation of the kingdom of God on earth. This suggests that God expects those He heals to submit themselves to His rule. He, after all, is the King of kings, and His children are the subjects of His kingdom. Perhaps your unwillingness to totally subject yourself to the dominion of Jesus Christ is what is hindering your recovery!

7. I am willing to allow Jesus Christ to rule over every aspect of my life.

G YES G NO

In addition to the twelve and the seventy whom Jesus endowed with healing power, he also pledged to give the same healing grace to those who believe the gospel and are baptized. Of such He said, "They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover" (Mark 16:18). That this actually occurred is substantiated in the Book of Acts. Not only were many signs and wonders done through the hands of the apostles, so that many sick people and those tormented by unclean spirits "were all healed" (Acts 5:16); but also many wonderful works were done by Philip, who was not one of the apostles: "for unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed" (Acts 8:7).

Paul was definitely not one of the original twelve or one of the seventy; yet the Bible says, "And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him. So when this was done, the rest of those on the island who

had diseases also came and were healed" (Acts 28:8-9).

God has placed the ministry of healing in the church even unto this day. Paul wrote that "God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings..." (1 Corinthians 12:28). It may be true that every believer does not have the gift of healing as a special ministry, but every local assembly ought to have some members who do possess this gift. It also seems as though a gift of healing should be present within the pastoral eldership of a local assembly, for James writes, "Is anyone among you sick? 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. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven" (James 5:14-15). Perhaps you have not called for the elders of your church to pray for you, and this is what is hindering your recovery!

8. I have called for the elders of my church to come and pray for me:

G YES G NO

Jesus seemed to take particular delight in healing people on the Sabbath. On one such occasion He was asked, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" Jesus answered, "What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath" (Matthew 12:10a-12). By answering in this manner, Jesus equated the healing of a sick man with the rescuing of a sheep out of a pit. The Bible says, "The Lord, He is God...we are His people and the sheep of His pasture" (Psalm 100:3). Could the Lord have found a better way to express His deep desire to heal His children?

Of course, a sheep would not have fallen into a pit had it not been straying from the flock. But this does not mean that a straying child of God is cut off forever from the Good Shepherd's mercy. The Bible says, "And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick" (Matthew 14:14). Perhaps you have lost hope in the Lord's compassion for you in this situation, and that is what is hindering your recovery!

9. I continue to have great hope that the Lord is going to heal me.

G YES G NO

The law of the Sabbath has been fulfilled, and Christians are no longer obligated to keep it in a ceremonial sense. Christians are, however, required to keep it in a spiritual sense. The word "sabbath" means rest, and Paul wrote, "For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest..." (Hebrews 4:10-11). How diligent have you been at ceasing from your own works and entering into the works of God? Jesus said, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30). Are you still laboring under the heavy burden of doing your own thing? Jesus delights in healing on the Sabbath. Perhaps your failure to cease from your own works and enter into His rest is hindering your recovery!

10. I have stopped living "my way" and have committed myself to living God's way.

G YES G NO

As Jesus entered the area of Tyre and Sidon, a Canaanite woman came up to Him and asked Him to heal her daughter. The Bible says that Jesus answered her not a word. When His disciples came to Him and urged Him to send her away, He told her, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Did she turn and leave? No! The Bible says she worshiped Him, saying "Lord, help me!" What is your first reaction when you ask the Lord for healing and He answers not a word? Or, what if He were to tell you, "Sorry, I'm not allowed to help people like you"? Would you be quick to give up and turn to the man-made remedies? Or would you respond like this woman and worship Him? Perhaps because you haven't received the answer you were expecting and have failed to worship Jesus anyway, this is hindering your recovery!

11. I am continuing to worship Jesus with all my heart even though I have not yet been healed.

G YES G NO

Jesus finally answered this lady by saying, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs." What a statement! Do you realize what Jesus was saying? He was saying that for God to heal one of His people is no more odd or difficult than a man giving bread to his children. Do children expect their fathers to provide them with food when they are hungry? Obviously yes. Then we should likewise expect Jesus to heal us when we are sick. The woman answered Him, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire" (Matthew 15:26-28). How great is your faith? How kind and compassionate and easily entreated do you believe our Lord to be? Perhaps it is your imperfect perception of the goodness of Jesus that is hindering your recovery!

12. I recognize that there is only One who is truly good, and that is God.

G YES G NO

On one occasion, Jesus was forced to preach from a small boat anchored a short distance off shore because the crowd was threatening to crush Him. This was not because they were angry at Him. Quite the contrary, "for He healed many, so that as many as had afflictions pressed about Him to touch Him" (Mark 3:10). The crowd must have been large and animated that day. The word translated "press" means "to seize or to embrace with affection." These people were overcome by the love and the kindness emanating from Jesus. They all wanted their healing. They were squeezing in, pushing past one another, in a multitude of valiant efforts to simply touch Him. Perhaps you feel crowded out. Perhaps you have never been the pushy kind. That may be well and good, but when it comes to Jesus Christ, He likes people with pushy faith. Perhaps your unwillingness to get aggressive in your pursuit of healing is what is hindering your recovery!

13. I am actively pursuing the healing touch of Jesus with great determination.

G YES G NO

Many times it seems as though terrible obstacles rear themselves up forming a barrier between us and our Healer. We have heard that Jesus heals. We believe that Jesus heals. But, oh what a struggle it is to make contact with Him, that we may actually be healed. Such was the problem of the woman

with the issue of blood. For twelve years she had struggled with this infirmity. The Bible says she had “suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse” (Mark 5:26). How discouraging when you invest your entire substance in the best that man has to offer and it’s all to no avail.

But one day this woman heard about the Healer and said to herself, “If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well” (v.28). Now the Bible says that a great crowd of people was thronging Jesus, and certainly many were pressing up against Him. Yet, when this woman touched the hem of His garment, she instantaneously stopped bleeding, and Jesus knew within Himself that power had gone out from Him. This woman was healed without even getting the conscious attention of the Healer. She simply knew that contact with Him was all that was necessary. Perhaps you have not yet fought your way through the crowd of medical negativism to reach out and touch the only One who can truly heal, and this is what is hindering your recovery!

14. I am vigorously pressing my way past every negative opinion concerning my condition.

G YES G NO

How did this woman know that the key was touching the hem of His garment? Being a daughter of Israel, she was surely aware of the teachings from the Book of Numbers in which the Lord told Moses, “Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners. And you shall have the tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them, and that you may not follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined, and that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy for your God” (Numbers 15:37-40).

Perhaps this woman had been a harlot. Perhaps she had only been involved in spiritual harlotry. Whatever the case, she knew she had to turn from her sins and commit herself to the commandments of the Lord. The tassels on the hem of the garment of our Savior became the focal point of her effort to receive her healing. It was more than her fingers that touched His clothing, it was her faith. For this reason He told her, “Daughter, your faith has made

you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction" (Mark 5:34). Perhaps you have not thoroughly repented of your own unfaithfulness to the Lord and focused your heart on a renewed commitment to His commandments, and this is what is hindering your recovery!

15. I am absolutely committed to Jesus as my Lord and will diligently keep all His commandments.

G YES G NO

As the healings of Jesus became widely known, the crowds assembled wherever He went. The Bible says, "Wherever He entered into villages, cities, or in the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched Him were made well" (Mark 6:56). These people were serious about being healed by Jesus Christ. The Bible says they "begged Him." How badly do you want to touch Jesus? The word translated "beg" in this passage means "to call near or to implore." Are you willing to beg? If you are waiting for Jesus to walk up to you and beg you to touch Him, you may have to wait a long time. Perhaps your unwillingness to implore Jesus to let you touch Him is hindering your recovery!

16. I am beseeching Jesus Christ with my whole heart to allow me to make contact with Him.

G YES G NO

As Jesus was leaving the city of Jericho, He passed a blind beggar sitting by the road. This beggar had heard about Jesus, so as the Lord was passing by, he cried out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (Mark 10:47). But the Bible says that many warned him to be quiet. Is there someone who is trying to prevent you from making contact with Jesus? Someone who keeps urging you to rely exclusively on the opinions of the doctors? What effect has this had on your faith? The blind man didn't let it hinder him at all, for the Bible says he cried out "all the more." Perhaps someone is trying to keep you away from Jesus, and this is what is hindering your recovery!

17. I am not listening to any unbelieving voice that is trying to get me to give up on God.

G YES G NO

Jesus heard the cries of this poor beggar, so He called for the man to be brought to Him. Then, as He stared into the man's darkened eyes, He asked him a very peculiar question. He said, "What do you want Me to do for you?" Why Jesus, isn't it obvious? The man is blind, so obviously he wants to be able to see. But James has written, "You do not have because you do not ask" (James 4:2b). This man didn't get offended because Jesus seemed to be ignoring the obvious. No, he simply responded, "That I may receive my sight." Jesus' answer was, "Go your way; your faith has made you well" (Mark 10:51-52). The man then commenced to follow Jesus along the road. Could it be that you haven't told Jesus clearly what you want Him to do? Or is it possible that you haven't committed yourself to following Him once you are healed? Perhaps the vagueness of your petition is what is hindering your recovery!

18. I am telling the Lord exactly what I need Him to do for me, and I am committed to following Him regardless of where He may lead:

G YES G NO

Maybe you have honestly sought the Lord and told Him what you want Him to do. Maybe you have committed to following Him and doing His will. Yet you still feel as though there is a barrier between you and your Healer. The Bible records just such a situation as Jesus was teaching inside a crowded house. A paralyzed man being carried by four companions was desperate to make contact with the Healer. So his friends carried him up on the roof of the house and proceeded to tear a hole through the ceiling. The Bible says, "When Jesus saw their faith..." (Mark 2:5). He saw it! Not just the man's faith but "their faith!"

Maybe you need someone to help you tear through the barriers and get you to Jesus. Who do you know who is full of faith and the Holy Spirit? You need helpers who are just as determined as you are. Call them. Tell them your need. Ask them to add their faith to yours. Perhaps you haven't been willing to admit the weakness of your own personal faith, and this is what is hindering your recovery!

19. I acknowledge that sometimes my own faith is weak and have therefore surrounded myself with people whose faith is strong.

G YES G NO

What are you willing to endure at the hands of Jesus Christ in order to be healed? In Mark 8:23, the Bible says, "So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything." How humiliating was it for this man to stand there while Jesus spit on his eyes? At least Jesus had the grace to first take Him out of town. Perhaps your unwillingness to go wherever Jesus leads you and undergo whatever He may decide to put you through is hindering your recovery!

20. I am willing to go anywhere and endure anything for Jesus Christ:

G YES G NO

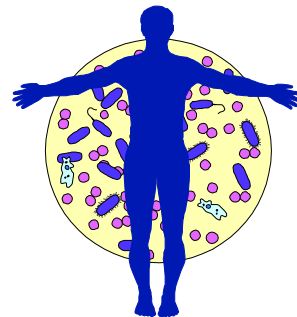
On one occasion the disciples of Jesus were unable to cast out a demon that was causing a young boy to go into epileptic seizures. When they asked Jesus why they couldn't cast it out, He answered, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting" (Mark 9:29). Perhaps your unwillingness to give yourself over to a time of serious prayer and fasting is what is hindering your recovery!

21. I have been praying diligently and fervently and have fasted many days:

G YES G NO

Every illness has its root cause.

A wide variety of sicknesses and diseases afflict mankind. Some are temporary in nature and normally disappear in a short time. Others are chronic, often requiring extensive medical treatments. These treatments, however, generally deal only with the symptoms. Rarely is traditional medicine overly concerned about root causes. But wouldn't it be better to deal with the cause of your disease? Then, when you are healed, the chances of recurrence will be virtually eliminated.



The root causes of disease can be grouped into three broad categories:

1. Organic causes, such as infections, poor nutrition, inadequate exercise, ingestion of toxic substances, injury, or birth abnormalities.
2. Spiritual causes, such as pent up anger, bitterness, anxiety, or depression.
3. A direct demonic attack.

Often these causes can overlap. For example, a person who is depressed may have little motivation to exercise. Or a person who is anxious could be that way because of insufficient nutrition. When the root cause is demonic attack, it may manifest itself in organic symptoms, spiritual symptoms, or both. The interrelationships between the body, the mind, and the spirit are complex and are often extremely difficult to sort out.

Frequently the root cause of a person's disease is the very thing that stands as a barrier between the sick person and the healing hand of the Master. For example, if a person wanting to be healed of lung cancer refuses to stop smoking cigarettes, his failure to repent of this sinful and deleterious practice will keep him from having the faith needed to touch the Lord. This does not mean the Lord couldn't reach out and heal the person in spite of his failure to repent, but this would constitute a miracle, and miracles are not guaranteed. As we have said earlier, healing is a conditional promise. What's more, we could pray for the man and cast the "demon of cancer" out of him all day long, but if he will not repent of his smoking, there is little hope he will be healed. Though a demon may have enticed him to begin smoking forty years before, the demon is not the problem now; unrepented sin is.

On the other hand, if the illness is entirely the result of a vicious attack by a demonic spirit, the spirit may indeed have to be cast out before there can be healing. The sick person must realize, however, that if he does not forsake his sin and commit himself fully to Jesus Christ, the demon will return, this time with seven more demons, and the condition of the man will end up being worse than it was before (see Luke 11:24-26).

It is vitally important that you carefully seek the Lord and ask Him to show you the root cause of your disease. You should also ask others whom you trust to do the same, understanding that those with a "gift of healing" will

be especially adept at identifying root causes and advising you on what needs to happen. There may be sin you need to confess and forsake. Don't forget, according to the Bible, any action not born out of faith in God is sin (Romans 14:23). Also, to know to do good and fail to do it is sin (James 4:17). God expects His people to live by faith and to express that faith by doing good.

It is possible that your condition is simply the result of maintaining a lifestyle that is not conducive to good health. Years of rushing around, eating processed foods, drinking soda pop, keeping late hours, breathing polluted air, and rarely spending time alone with the Lord is certainly enough to bring on some kind of chronic illness. But whatever the root cause, whether organic, spiritual, or demonic, the solution is ultimately the same: pushing past all the obstacles and making contact with Jesus Christ; for to touch Him, to embrace Him, to hold fast to Him with a meek and submissive heart, is to be healed.

Just a touch of the Healer's hand.

The headline of a recent newspaper story read:

"Doctors can be hazardous to your health."

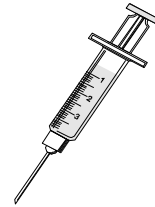
The article began with this alarming statement: "Doctors kill more Americans every year through negligence than die in car crashes, according to experts who have studied the issue." It went on to say that "tens of thousands of other patients are disabled by medical malpractice." The article stated flatly that "150,000 Americans are killed annually by medical treatment..."* This is nearly three times the total number of Americans killed in Vietnam.



*Harrisburg Patriot-News, Harrisburg, PA, May 9,1993, p.1.

Why place your life in such peril by submitting yourself to a fallible human being practicing the imperfect art of medicine? Why get your only counsel from someone who operates primarily by evaluating symptoms and reasoning out logical treatments based on an accumulation of the presently known information? Why not do what Asa failed to do? Why not seek the One who knows all things, who is perfect in all His ways? Why not seek the Healer, Jesus Christ? The Bible says He is a “rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6). Perhaps you would find the reward of restored and preserved health.

Why doesn't everyone quickly respond to this sensible advice? It is because many would rather place themselves on the altar of medical superstition than on the altar of Almighty God. Paul pleads, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1). Have you really done this? Have you presented your body to Him? Paul taught that your body is a member of Christ's body. Would He not heal a member of His own body? But perhaps He can't because you've detached yourself and He can't get close enough to touch you. Perhaps, because you are feeding and caring for your body the way you see fit, irrespective of the principles of God's Word, His deep love for you virtually forces Him to restrain His hands from touching you.



Ephesians 5:29 says, “For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it.” What is the basis for the way you nourish and cherish your flesh? Is it derived from the wisdom of God or the wisdom of man? Do you live to eat or do you eat to live? Is your moderation known to all? The Bible says that we ought to care for ourselves “just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones” (Ephesians 5:30). Again, why wouldn't the Lord heal His own body and keep it healthy?

Perhaps the problem is that you do not properly discern the Lord's body. This was a significant problem in the church at Corinth, which is why Paul wrote, “For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep” (1 Corinthians 11:30). According to Paul, the underlying reason why some had even died was that they did not really recognize that they were members of “His flesh and of His bones.” He went on to say, “For if we

would judge ourselves, we would not be judged" (v.31). In other words, the weakness, the sickness, and the deaths were corrective judgments of God upon His people. But what was the motive behind these judgments? Paul explained, "But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world" (v.32).

The Lord loves us and desperately wants us to spend eternity with Him. He does not want us to end up lost in the lake of fire with those who never knew God. In an effort to teach us His precepts and bring us to a place of complete submission, in faithfulness He allows us to be afflicted. This does not mean it is not His will that we be healed. It simply means we need to honestly examine ourselves. We need to pray with David, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalms 139:23-24).

In light of the underlying reasons for sickness and disease, when a child of God does get sick, should his first reaction be to try to alleviate the pain and reduce the perceived risks by seeking the counsel of a medical man? Or should it be to begin a serious effort at self-examination, submitting totally to Jesus Christ as to a faithful Savior and Lord? Is it really possible to simultaneously do both?

How desperately do you want to be healed? Is there anything in your life that you are not willing to change? Every day, multitudes of sick and diseased people place their hope for healing entirely in the hands of a medical practitioner. They eagerly submit to whatever the physician prescribes, even when it means going under the surgeon's knife or being pumped full of synthesized chemicals. Oh, that we would be so eager to submit ourselves to Jesus Christ—and so conscientious in our obedience to His counsel.

Are you willing to submit your condition completely to His care? Are you willing to do whatever He tells you to do? Are you willing to place your recovery completely in His nail-scarred hands? What if He tells you to do something you just don't want to do? Are you willing to do it anyway? His hands are the only hands that can truly heal. And they are filled to overflowing with healing power. So why not allow yourself to fall completely into the healing hands of Jesus Christ? He desires to touch you and make you whole!

“And the power of the Lord was present to heal them. And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed them all” (Luke 5:17; Luke 6:19).



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