

Divine Healing

God is the Great Physician. His knowledge of the human mind and body is complete. He can do more for the sick and the diseased than can all earthly doctors and surgeons combined. He created us; is it not reasonable, then, to believe that He can heal us when we are sick?

The Provision of Healing

Christ's suffering and death purchased healing for us-physically, mentally, and spiritually. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows...With his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:4-5). This promise definitely includes physical healing, for the Gospel of Matthew says this passage was fulfilled by Christ's healing of people who were sick: "He cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaiah the prophet, saying, "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (Matthew 8:16-17). (See also 1 Peter 2:24).

The healing ministry of Christ did not end with His earthly life; it is part of His work in the church today. He promised, "These signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils . . . they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:17-18). Listed among the gifts of the Spirit for the present-day church are "the gifts of healing" (I Corinthians 12:9).

James 5:14-15 presents God's plan for divine healing: "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: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." Laying on of hands and anointing with oil usually accompany prayer for healing, in accordance with God's Word and to focus faith.

Faith in the Lord is the key to receiving healing. The Gospels record that Jesus healed people according to their faith. (See Matthew 9:29;13:58; Mark 2:5; 5:34, 36; 9:23-24;10:52.) By the power of God the Apostle Paul was able to raise up a lame man at Lystra because he perceived that the man had faith to be healed (Acts 14:8-10).

Prayer for healing, like all prayer, must be offered by faith in the name of Jesus, with proper motives, from a repentant heart, and in submission to the will of God (Acts 3:16; James 4:3; I John 3:21-22; 5:14-15). God does not always answer in the manner and time that we expect, but we must always keep our trust in Him, even when we do not understand circumstances. Moreover, whatever healing or release from handicaps and weaknesses that Christians do not receive in this life, they will obtain in the resurrection, for their mortal bodies will be glorified and given immortality, and death itself shall be destroyed (1 Corinthians 15:26, 49-57).

Healing in Bible Times

God gave the first recorded promise of divine healing soon after He brought the Israelites out of Egypt. He told them, "I am the LORD that healeth thee" (Exodus 15:26). Psalm 103:3 describes God as One "who healeth all thy diseases".

The Old Testament records a number of miracles of healing and even raising of the dead. For example, God used the prophet Elijah to restore a dead child to life (1 Kings 17:22). Through the prophet Elisha He raised a child to life and brought cleansing to Naaman the leper (2 Kings 4:32-35; 5:1-14). God healed King Hezekiah in response to his prayer and added fifteen years to his life (2 Kings 20:5).

The New Testament records many healings in the earthly ministry of Jesus, and He performed many that are not individually recorded. "Jesus went about all Galilee...healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people" (Matthew 4:23). He gave sight to the blind, unstopped deaf ears, cleansed lepers, made the lame to walk, and raised the dead (Matthew 11:4-5).

After Christ's ascension, He continued His ministry of healing through His apostles and other disciples. Working through Peter and John, He healed a lame man who had never walked (Acts 3:6-8). Many miracles occurred in Stephen's ministry, and many people were healed during Philip's revival in Samaria (Acts 6:8; 8:7). Through God's power, Peter raised Dorcas from the dead (Acts 9:36-42). And God worked special miracles of healing in the ministry of Paul (Acts 19:11-12). Comparatively few healings of that time were recorded, for Acts 5:16 states, "There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one."

God Heals Today

God still heals today. Many contemporary instances are documented in two books published by Word Aflame Press: *Miracles in our Day* and *God Answers Prayer*. *These examples demonstrate that God's promise of healing is still being fulfilled.*

The good that medical doctors and medicines do is to be appreciated, for God is the ultimate source of all healing. It is He who has given doctors skill and intelligence, and it is He who created the substances from which medicines are extracted or manufactured.

Doctors and medicines, however, can only assist the human body in renewing the natural healing power invested in it by the Creator. Even when a person receives medical assistance, he can still look to God for divine healing. God can heal with medical help, but He also can and often does heal miraculously without any human assistance.

Many people in our churches can testify to being miraculously healed by God. And what God has done for others, He will do for you. Whatever your sickness or disease, He can make you whole. Look to Him today for your healing.