

# infuse

SUMMER 2007

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**A**t one time or another, everyone needs or wants to be healed. Divine healing is a miracle God lovingly extends to those who call upon Him. While the Bible is full of examples of healing, the incidents in the Old Testament prove God does not instantly intervene and heal every disease. In the New Testament, during Jesus' time and during the apostles' early ministry, tremendous healings took place. Today, healings are not taking place to the same degree.

Many Christians wonder why they aren't healed and question whether healing really works. Healing does occur today, it just may not happen according to one's own plan or desire. The apostle Paul lived with a thorn in the flesh (2 Corinthians 12:7), yet Paul continued in the faith. Why wasn't Paul healed? Was there a sin that kept God from healing him? No. In Romans 7 Paul exposed his sins of covetousness and his other human frailties. The thorn in Paul's flesh did not involve sin or he would have disclosed it in this chapter. Did Paul lack faith? No. Even if Paul lacked faith, the lack of faith or of healing isn't a sin. Healing is a gift from God and as such is not commanded or required.

God knew what was best for Paul. Second Corinthians 12:7, "To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh." While Paul pleaded with God to remove it, the

Lord answered him with, "'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. This is why for Christ's sake I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

For those of us suffering with an ailment and are waiting on the Lord for healing, there is no better example of faith or positive attitude to follow than Paul's. For whatever reason God decided to withhold His blessing of healing of Paul or you, only God knows. God knew what was best for Paul just as He knows what is best for you. Paul's example teaches that one's physical weaknesses may be used to successfully build one's spiritual muscle.

Through the pages of this issue you will receive guidance and read many encouraging stories of hope and healing. Healing may be a single event or a life long process, which will be completed in the Kingdom. My prayer for each of you is, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13).

Noni McVey  
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# A MEETING WITH GOD

By Daniel Tolaga

Three years ago I was diagnosed with lung cancer. I felt devastated, weak, and hopeless. I kept deteriorating week after week and I ended up in a hospital. Doctors told me there was nothing they could do. I asked the doctor how long he expected me to live. He looked at me sadly, paused, and said, “Three months...four months max. I am sorry.” His words felt as a knife being slowly stabbed in my chest.

I requested close friends to visit me so we could see each other before my “departure.”

A friend of mine, Susan, came to see me in the hospital. She brought a Bible, held my hand, and said to me, “Only God can change your situation.”

“God? No, God can’t help me. It’s over. There is no cure for the type of cancer I have,” I said, and closed my eyes, as I was too weak to even continue doubting her. She started praying for me. She prayed, and prayed. A nurse interrupted her, stating that visitation hours are over. Susan said, “Fine, but I can’t stop now. We are having a meeting with God.” The nurse looked at her, then looked at my pale face and said: “Okay, take your time.”

Susan continued to pray for another hour holding my right hand and the Bible. She continued visiting me day after day. Hospital nurses figured I would die anyway, so they let her come every day and stay past the visitation hours. Susan prayed genuinely. Even though I was weak and heavily deteriorated, I could feel her energy during prayers. It was like electricity passing through her hands into my weak body.

On the seventh day of the prayer, I felt stronger than I had felt in the six previous days combined. I felt like a rechargeable battery being charged with new energy. Day after day, my health continued to steadily improve. Local doctors and nurses kept coming with better news with each passing test. After a month, the cancer shrank by 50 percent, and doctors were so surprised they asked me to take double tests (blood, x-rays, etc). After two months my cancer completely disappeared. Doctors concluded the untreatable cancer simply “killed itself.” For them it was a miracle, for me it was more than a miracle. It was God’s love bestowed upon me, and it was Susan’s prayer that God answered.

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ prayed “our” and

“thine” prayers focusing on the Kingdom of God and the needs of others. He also taught the importance of ministry and declared to His disciples, “By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35). When asked what the great commandment of the Law was, He answered that it was twofold: love for God and love for neighbor (Matthew 22:37-40). This is exactly why God answered Susan’s prayers—because she had love for God and love for me as her neighbor (friend). Love for neighbor, Jesus indicated, is lived out in acts of mercy meeting need. He declared that a basis for eternal judgment of life is how well each person has met the needs of others (Matthew 25:31-46).

The importance of genuine prayer can never be underestimated. In 2 Kings 20:1-7, King Hezekiah was told by the prophet Amos that he should set his house in order because he was surely going to die (v. 1). Hezekiah prayed genuinely (v. 2,3). The Lord heard his prayers and said, “I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold, and I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD. And I will add fifteen years to your life” (v. 5).

Many prayers go unanswered because our society is overwhelmingly focused on “me, me, me” and “I, I, I.” Many worshippers don’t understand the universe does not revolve around “me” or “I.” God wants us to help others and God is pleased with those who are not focused only on themselves (“me” and “I”).

Focus on the “needs of others” is exactly what pleases God and the hearts of His obedient children. God gave the gift of life to King Hezekiah, and He gave the gift of life to me. God answered Susan’s prayers, and I answered God’s call to serve Him. I wish I had developed a better relationship with God earlier in my life. Without Him, I missed out on a lot in my life. His love is the most beautiful feeling any human being can experience. I feel God’s love all over my body, as God is everywhere. I call upon all readers of this article, who have not accepted God yet, to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior right now. I also call upon all devoted Christians to start or continue including “needs of others” in their daily prayers to God.

God bless you and your loved ones! Amen! **i**

# Jesus

By Loren M. Chamberlain

“Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about Him spread all over Syria and people brought to Him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon possessed, the epileptics and the paralytics, and He healed them. Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and the region across the Jordan followed Him.”

Matthew 4:23-25

The Bible has a great deal to say about the healing ministry of Jesus Christ. Great crowds followed Him either to be healed or to see the miraculous healing of the sick and infirm. However, Jesus was not only healing but He was teaching and preaching. Jesus’ teaching and preaching demonstrated His concern for understanding and commitment. His acts of healing authenticated His teaching and preaching, proving He truly was the prophesied Savior and Messiah the prophets prophesied about. “For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6). He is both “Mighty God” (all-powerful) and “Counselor” (all-loving). This message of hope was fulfilled in the birth of Christ. He came to deliver all people from their slavery to sin.

## PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL HEALING

Jesus preached the Good News of the Kingdom of God; God is with us, and He cares for us. Christ can heal us, not just of physical sickness, but of spiritual sickness also. No sin or problem is too great or small that Jesus can’t handle. These words of good news offered hope, freedom, peace of heart, and eternal life with God.

When some men brought a paralyzed man on a mat to Him to be healed, notice where Jesus placed the emphasis on the man’s healing. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven” (Matthew 9:2). Notice, among the first words Jesus said to the paralyzed man, “I have forgiven your sins.” Then He healed the man. It is so very easy to concentrate on God’s power to heal physical sickness and fail to see the most important part, His power to forgive spiritual sickness in the form of sin. Jesus quickly made it clear that this man needed spiritual health more than physical health. Spiritual health only comes from Jesus’ healing touch. Jesus knew immediately that this man was paralyzed both physically and spiritually. He could not walk, and in addition, he did not know Jesus. By His actions Jesus demonstrated that the man’s spiritual state was the most important concern.

This is a revealing message for us. If God does not heal us or a loved one physically, it may be because God is more concerned with our spiritual healing. No doubt, we will experience complete physical and spiritual healing at the resurrection, but first we have to come to know Jesus.

“When the men of that place recognized Jesus, they sent word to all the surrounding country. People brought all their sick to Him and

# HEALING

begged Him to let the sick just touch the edge of His cloak, and all who touched Him were healed” (Matthew 14:35-35).

The people recognized Jesus as a miraculous healer, and they were focusing on the physical aspect rather than the spiritual, demonstrating their lack of understanding of who He really was. They never came to Jesus for spiritual healing but for physical healing. They were more interested in prolonging their lives on earth or seeing a miracle performed rather than securing a place in eternity in the Kingdom of God. Many of the people of Jesus’ day missed His whole message because they were focused on physical healing rather than being focused on His eternal plan for all mankind. Only when the whole message of Jesus is understood can we appreciate how He can truly change our physical life to an eternal spiritual life in the Kingdom of God.

## THE MYSTERY OF HEALING

Healing takes place through the wounds of Jesus. The prophet Isaiah foresaw this when he wrote, “But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5). The apostle Peter also understood this as he wrote, “He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His

wounds you have been healed” (1 Peter 2:24). Therefore, we are also reconciled to God through Jesus’ suffering. Because of this, we have the possibility of seeing that which was once divided and scattered brought back together, healed.

There must be major surgery performed by God if people’s lives are to be healed. During this healing process He exposes the rampant sinfulness that He died to cure. It is not always easy to experience healing and recovery, nor can we expect it to be instantaneous. Wounds that are deep will take time to heal. The healing operation means going under the knife of the Master Surgeon to allow Him to deal with the sickness. Only then can people be healed and begin the process of recovery.

Complete healing and recovery will not take place until our resurrection and receiving of a new spiritual body. Christ died to pay the death penalty we all have incurred by sinning, and those who accept that sacrifice are considered righteous before God. However, we will still have to struggle with the sin nature, and the need to come to God daily for healing and recovery from sin, even though in a very real sense, we are already healed.

An additional paradox exists in our need for healing. James encourages believers to pray over sick folk, anointing them with oil (James 5:14). Obviously we should petition God when people are ill. However, this is not a

perfect prescription for certain recovery; it is submission to God regarding His will for that person. God may decide not to heal at that time. Why? Because God may decide to use that sickness that so weakens and disturbs us to glorify Himself and at the same time help us as He helped Paul. Paul wrote, “To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me” (2 Corinthians 12:7-9).

Notice that God did not leave Paul in a helpless state. God promised His grace to help Paul endure through his struggles. This same promise is extended to us also. Therefore, if we are going to boast, let us boast about being weak enough for God to use. When we ask God for healing and He does, rejoice! However, if He chooses to use our weaknesses as a method of displaying His grace and power in our lives through suffering, so bringing help and hope to others who are suffering, rejoice! Through our wounds and what we suffer others may be pointed to our Savior and be invited to make an appointment with the Great Physician. **i**





# Get Up & Walk

By Tyler Barnett

**A**s your loved one lies in the fetal position on his bed, wincing in pain, eyes shut tightly around a flood of tears, grasping the source of pain as if he could squeeze the hurt right out, wondering where and why his pain has come...you begin to pray. Why? Maybe it is out of fear or desperation, perhaps because it is what your parents did for you when you were in a similar situation. Maybe you simply do not have a remedy to the pain that has befallen your loved one. Examine for a moment how the reality of your faith, in this very situation, is able to heal your friend. Your prayers and the faith they are rooted in, are the catalyst for healing. What a powerful gift: your faith can heal! Not only can the faith of believers heal others, more importantly, it is the driving force of their own salvation.

Consider the story of the paralytic that Jesus healed in Luke 5:17-20. Luke writes about Jesus' travels from town to town around the Sea of Galilee, which was comprised of humble farming communities and fishing villages. By this time Jesus had developed a following with certain hopes and expectations. Naturally the sick flocked (as best they could) to Jesus and begged He might heal them, as was rumored. The Pharisees followed to learn as well as challenge His actions. Jesus targeted the poor, prisoners, oppressed, and the blind (Luke 4:18-19). He was well known for his teachings but the people were most impressed by His miracles.

As Jesus taught the Pharisees, teachers of the law, and a crowd from all over the area, a group of men brought their paralyzed friend to be healed. They tried to push their way through the crowd but were unsuccessful. Imagine coming late to class, a lecture hall full of 300 students intently listening to a Nobel Prize winning professor. The only open seat is in the

second row, right in front of this great teacher. You are determined to get right up front so you will not miss any more. You squeeze your way over knees and between backpacks, when you decide it is impossible and have to think of another way. Your new plan is to rappel in from the roof! Now do it with your paralyzed buddy on your back, like the men in Luke 5. The men were unable to push through the crowd with their friend on his mat so they decided to lower him in from the roof. This is an incredible illustration of determination. So great was their faith to present their comrade in front of Jesus to be healed that they too received an unexpected blessing.

Jesus told them, "Friend, your sins are forgiven" (Luke 5:20). What a blessing in disguise. Their faith in the power of God actually caused their sins to be forgiven. The wisdom of Jesus is apparent as He recognizes the men as not only determined and faithful for their friend's sake, but also as sinners in need of mercy. It would seem the paralytic to be the one in need where in actuality all of the men were in need of forgiveness that only Christ could give. Often times it is the determination and faith of those around us that allows us to come before Christ individually and receive forgiveness. Some are able to make a "leap of faith" while others may require a gentle "nudge."

The Pharisees picked up on this dichotomy of healing and sin forgiveness and were quick to challenge. "Who is

this fellow that speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (Luke 5:21). YES! "Who can forgive sins but GOD alone," Pharisees? You are so right! The Pharisees were wise, seeing that only God could do such a thing, and yet still unable to make the connection that Christ is God. They had not realized that they pointed out a discrepancy in their own beliefs. They had seen Jesus heal others in that evening and curiously did not confront Him. His teachings were obviously inspired and yet they did not dispute Him. Once Christ forgave the sins of the men He bridged the gap between Jesus the Miracle Worker and Jesus the Son of Man. Jesus seized the opportunity to not only heal a paralyzed man but also do as He was sent to do: bring forgiveness.

Prayer and Faith, in combination with a little determination and support from friends and family are the elemental forces that will drive your walk with Christ. Have courage that you have a support structure surrounding you allowing you the ability to stand up from your mat and walk off your paralysis. Your prayers for your friend in pain exercised the duality of this message: the power of prayer to heal and the power of your faithfulness, through which you may receive forgiveness. Remember the determination of others that brought you to Christ and continue to show your faith to those around you in hopes that your faith will lead others to healing and ultimately forgiveness in Jesus Christ. **i**

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# The Sin

# SICKNESS CONNECTION

By Jeff Reed

**I**s there a relationship between illness and sin? If I am sick, am I being punished? These are questions I have personally dealt with in my own experience with illness. Everyone experiences illness to one degree or another. Everyone will eventually die (Hebrews 9:27). It is evident that God did not design our physical bodies to last forever. Sickness is a common plight for everyone.

## AN EARLY CONNECTION

We can see a direct relationship between sin and illness early in human history. Because of the first sin of Adam and Eve, God declared “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life” (Genesis 3:17), and “By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return” (Genesis 3:19). It is evident that because of sin, pain, suffering, and death entered into the world.

We can also see a connection between sin and sickness in Deuteronomy 28. God promises the nation Israel blessings for obedience to Him and promises curses for disobedience. One of those curses is that “the LORD will plague you with diseases until he has destroyed you from the land you are entering to possess. The LORD will strike you with wasting disease, with fever and inflammation, with scorching heat and drought, with blight and mildew, which will plague you until you perish” (Deuteronomy 28:21-22).

God gave laws in Leviticus 13-15 that are intended to keep disease from occurring and spreading. These laws are understood by the modern scientific community to be based on sound physical principles of disease prevention. Failure to follow these laws of hygiene would have the natural effect of spreading disease. God also gave laws in Leviticus 11 concern-

ing which animals would be safe for humans to eat. He is the Designer and Creator of all life. Therefore it is reasonable to understand that these prohibitions against eating certain animals are based on solid scientific truths.

## AIDS

“The pandemic of Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).” This disease has killed over 25 million people since it was identified in 1981 and presently kills between 3 and 4 million people annually. The virus is currently present in over 38 million living people and the number is steadily increasing. The most generally accepted origin of the virus is from hunting and eating monkeys and apes, most specifically chimpanzees—animals that are clearly prohibited as food in Leviticus 11. Because of this sin, the HIV virus entered into the human population.

HIV is transmitted among humans primarily through sexual contact. It is through the sinful practices listed in Leviticus 18 that HIV and other diseases can be spread. It is recognized that monogamy in marriage and abstinence before marriage are the only realistic methods available to prevent this disease from spreading.

Unfortunately, the sins of others can affect the innocent. One half million children die each year from AIDS that they have either inherited from their mothers or from sexual abuse. Romans 3:23 states, “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” So it may be from our own sins or from the sins of others that we suffer illness. But that is not always the case.

## EXPERIENCING GRACE

Consider what is recorded in the Gospel of John. “As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His



disciples asked him, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind.’ ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned,’ said Jesus, ‘but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life’” (John 9:1-3). Sometimes we suffer illness so that we can experience the grace of God in our lives. By suffering through sickness and hardships God can develop His character and wisdom within us.

The apostle Paul suffered with a physical illness that was figuratively a “thorn in the flesh.” He asked Jesus to remove it and Jesus replied, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). Although it may not be natural for us to think of it like this, there are times when an illness can be a blessing.

**AM I BEING PUNISHED?**

If I am sick, am I being punished? As we have seen, this may not necessarily be the reason for your illness, but it could be. Consider what Paul wrote to the Corinthian church about the consequences of not observing the Passover reverently, “That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep” (1 Corinthians 11:30). This is a direct indication of illness and death being punishment for sin. There is also an incident where Jesus warned a man that He had healed of paralysis, “Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, ‘See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you’” (John 5:14).

We may not know if our sickness is punishment, but it would be wise to consider the possibility. We should consider it an opportunity to examine our lives and repent of any sins. We should do as James tells us, “call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be

forgiven” (James 5:14-15). It is comforting to know that we will be forgiven of sin if it has caused our sickness.

**THE CONNECTION**

There is a definite sin/sickness connection. Illness entered the world because of sin. It is sustained and spread because of sin. Although, sometimes we experience illness so we can more fully appreciate God’s grace. Just as there will be an end to sin in the future Kingdom of God, so will there be a complete end of illness. “There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away” (Revelation 21:4). i



# Seal Your Fate

By Holly M. Warner

- Is your mind set on the Father’s plan?
- Or are you too wrapped up to understand?
- Is your heart with our Lord, the King of King’s?
- Or do you dwell only on the worldly things?
- Do you study and pray for His truth to be learned?
- When your moment comes, will you be concerned?
- Is it your goal in life to be least or best?
- When the time is here, will you pass His test?
- Will you place your soul in the palm of His hand?
- Do you yearn to walk with Him, in the promised land?
- Is your trust in Him, or in yourself;
- To get your name in that book on His shelf?
- You have the knowledge, now you know.
- You were forgiven, through the Lamb’s shed flow.
- Will you work and try with all your might?
- Or will you succumb to Satan’s fight?
- Will you get it now, or will it be too late?
- To save your soul, to seal your fate.



# God Is Our Healer

## BUT THE DECISION IS YOURS

By Emmanuel Donkor

The word healing often brings up images of sickness, depression, diseases, hopelessness, and the like, which have been associated with humanity for years. Words and phrases that illustrate this fact are found in the Collins English Dictionary. Phrases such as “to restore” or “be restored to health” are among the various definitions associated with the word healing. A further look at a thesaurus throws up words such as mend, regenerate, patch-up, settle, reconcile, and put right among others.

The general idea these words generate is of something or an object that is whole at its creation but is “broken” and therefore needs to be returned to its original form. It presents an image of something that has depreciated from its original form due to one reason or the other and that this object needs to be restored or “reconciled.”

While pondering the essence of healing, I am reminded of a very significant landmark event that occurred in England in the early nineteenth century. March 1807 has been remembered as a period in which the courage and persistence of visionaries such as William Wilberforce helped in restoring the dignity and sanctity of human beings who, for the color of their skin, had been considered something other than human. This led to the British Parliament passing the anti-slavery Act, which made it illegal for human beings to be treated in such a humiliating manner. It was, in effect, the restoration of mankind being brought back to his original state. The release of the movie, *Amazing Grace*, demonstrates the way God sees all of mankind.

Our world today is in dire need of healing, healing from its past. It is therefore not surprising the world, as was originally created by God, is in a broken state. Christians are in a broken state and in need of God’s healing.

The broken state of the world today is represented by famine, disease, moral degeneration, apathy, and strife that we see all around us on a daily basis. Surprisingly, Christians are sometimes caught up in this endless web with no way out.

God, in His infinite wisdom and love created the

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*“Our healing,  
whether physical,  
mental, or emotional  
depends on our  
genuine willingness  
to be healed.”*

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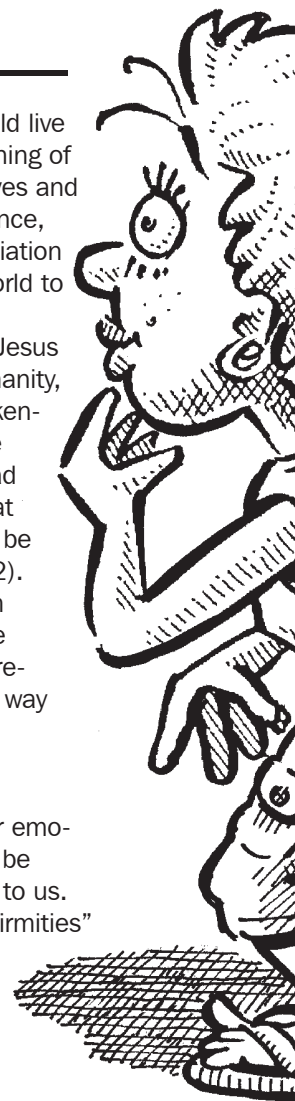
world to be a place of peace where man would live a life that He had purposed before the beginning of creation. And even though the state of our lives and the world is the direct result of our disobedience, God continues to extend His hand of reconciliation to us. He is a merciful God who wants the world to be what He first created it to be.

This is the reason why He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, born into humanity, to heal the world of its “sicknesses” and brokenness. Similarly, God wants His children to live purposeful, healthy lives, fulfilling what He had created us to do. He has always intended that his ultimate desire for us was to prosper and be in good health as our soul prospers (3 John 2).

However, we need to be co-initiators with God in the process of healing. This means we have to meet the needed criteria in order to receive our healing and restoration back to the way He originally intended us to live.

### THE POWER OF CHOICE

Our healing, whether physical, mental, or emotional depends on our genuine willingness to be healed. This is one power God has entrusted to us. Even though He desires to heal us of our “infirmities” and thus restore us to our original state, God does not impose this on us. Rather, He most often requires commitment from us; the choice of whether we want to be healed or otherwise.



Indeed, throughout God's dealings with mankind, He often leaves the final decision of healing to us. That is God's nature. He is our Creator and we are His "created" beings, yet He has never imposed His will on us. He placed within man's genetic make-up the power of choice or free will. This often means that when God proposes a measure, which is aimed at our wellbeing, He often leaves the decision as to whether we choose to obey Him or not entirely to us with its resulting consequences.

In the book of Deuteronomy, we see a demonstration of choice in God's relationship with His "chosen" people, the Israelites. In His promise to the Israelites after their ordeal in Egypt, He gave them the choice as to whether to accept the promises He had made to their forefather, Abraham. In Deuteronomy 11:26-28, God clearly declares:

"See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse—the blessing if you obey the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today; the curse if you disobey the command of the Lord your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods which you have known."

God wanted peace, prosperity, and security for the Israelites but left the final decision of its fulfillment to them. They were, on this occasion, in a position of authority.

In Jesus' earthly ministry He often gave the final decision of healing to those who were in need of it. This, in effect, meant that the oppressed, the broken hearted, and the demon-possessed had to recognize their need for restoration for healing to take place. Jesus often asked questions such as "what do you want me to do for you?" (Luke 18:41).

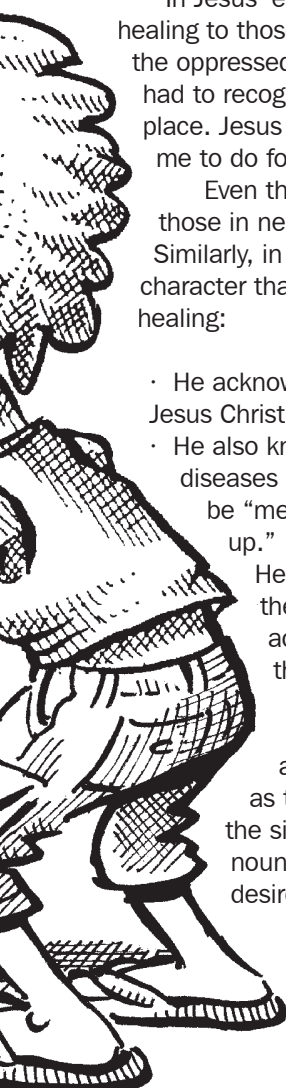
Even though Christ was in a position of power, He gave those in need of healing the "upper hand" during the process. Similarly, in Luke 5:17-20 the paralytic demonstrated the character that should be a feature of a person in need of Jesus' healing:

- He acknowledged God's power to heal his infirmity through Jesus Christ. Thus Jesus was in a position of power.
- He also knew he was meant originally to live a life free from diseases and infirmities. Thus, he recognized the need to be "mended," "restored," "reconciled" and "patched-up."

He knew through the miraculous works of Jesus He had the power to heal him. However, he needed to also accept his need for healing. This was the other side of the bargain Jesus needed him to fulfill.

This is what drove him and his friends to defy all the odds against them and to have him healed as the "power of the Lord was present for Him to heal the sick" (Luke 5:17). It's not surprising that Jesus pronounced him healed on the grounds of his faith and the desire in His ability to heal him.

We could pray for an individual to be healed. However, the individual must also be prepared to exercise his faith in God's power to heal him. Without the cooperating faith of the individual, the process of healing is often stalled. Some-



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## HEALTH & HEALING

By Jewel MacLellan

### 1. HOW IS YOUR HEALTH?

#### 2. WHAT IS HEALTH?

Medical definition of health is the absence of disease.

Spiritual definition of health is the wholeness of God.

#### 3. WHAT IS HEALING?

Medical healing is physical, chemical or surgical intervention to overcome disease.

God's healing is the activity that brings wholeness to a person wounded by sin. It is an ongoing process of transformation of the person into a new reality, the image of Jesus Christ (II Cor 5:17).

#### 4. HOW DOES GOD'S HEALING BRING ABOUT WHOLENES?

It is the total transformation that includes mending the physical, emotional, spiritual and relational aspects of a person. Many view the human body with removable, repairable, replaceable parts but in fact the body is a complex unit. When one part is hurting, it affects other parts as well.

#### 5. WHAT IS THE GOAL OF RELIGIOUS HEALING?

It is not practicing medicine without a license. It does not replace medical interventions.

It is not about miracles (focusing on an event so sensational that it forces faith from the observer) (Luke 11:29).

Religious healing enables the person who is hurting to experience God meeting their need (physically, emotionally, and spiritually).

#### 6. WHO DOES THE HEALING?

God has chosen to establish His presence in the world through the weakness and limitation of human beings (Mat. 10:1, Mark 16:18, Luke 10:9).

Ministers of God's healing are those people of God who reach out and touch the lives of hurting people in their world.

Any healing comes totally from God as the source and cause of healing and totally from His ministers as instruments God uses to transmit His healing power.

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# you too can *make the sick better*

By David W. T. Brattston

**L**ike Jesus, you can cure the sick or make them better. This truth is not only the teaching of the Church of God International based on one possible interpretation of the Bible among many, but was shared by early Christians, some of whom knew the writers of the New Testament personally and could ask them for clarifications or explanations of what they had written. The following article will include these non-biblical authors to show that ancient Christians embraced the same ideas about healing as taught in our own day.

No doubt all Infuse readers are familiar with Christ's command in Matthew 10:7-8 and Luke 10:9 that missionaries and other traveling preachers are to cure the sick before telling them that the Kingdom of God is near. Few readers will have heard of a writing, from a minority of early Christians called the Gospel of Thomas. Although different from the majority in many ways, it repeats the commandment and extends it to all who travel. Indeed, Mark 16:18 widens the power of healing to all who truly believe.

Christian healings continued after the first century. Irenaeus, a pastor in France, mentioned them as still current in the AD 180s. So did Clement in Egypt, dean of the world's foremost Christian school in the next decade. So also did Tertullian in Tunisia early in the third century.

Clement's successor as dean was Origen, who recorded in the late 240s that "traces" of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, including cure of the sick, remained in the church. Although still occurring, they were apparently less common than in apostolic times.

Besides healings, Origen considered among the gifts of the Spirit to be "a marvelous meekness of spirit and a complete change of character." He thought physical healing to be less important and less indicative of the working of the Holy Spirit than works of mercy and love. Even if you cannot perform a cure, you too can perform such works.

A chief way of helping the ill is to visit them. Remember Christ's teaching in Matthew 25:34-39 that it is deeds of love and mercy—such as feeding the hungry, visiting prisoners, and looking after the sick—that will be rewarded in the Kingdom of Heaven. This agrees with Matthew 7:21-23, where Christ said that performing miracles does not replace such works. What we do for the least sick person we do for Christ (Matthew 25:40). Visiting might not cure the patient but it can make their symptoms less uncomfortable, making their lives better, although not perfect.

Visiting the sick was strongly encouraged in early Christianity. Clement quoted Matthew 25:34-40 to remind Christians of this duty in the 190s. Tertullian spoke of it as one desirable fruit

of a happy Christian marriage. Another ancient Christian writing considered it a very serious duty.

Shortly before AD 249, Three Books of Testimonies classed visiting the sick to be among such important Christian activities as forgiving sins, helping the poor, loving enemies, and the Golden Rule itself—which indicates that Christians held visiting the sick in the highest regard. The author repeated Matthew 25:36 and quoted an earlier author: "Be not slack to visit the sick man; for from these things thou shalt be strengthened in love."

It is particularly appropriate for ministers to visit the sick. James 5:14 instructs church officers to do so, adding that they should also pray for them and anoint them with oil. A church manual written around AD 217 encourages deacons to find out who is sick and inform the pastor so that he can pay a visit; ill people, it says, are much comforted when they know the pastor (their "high priest") is

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## **Sick In Bed** By Sarah Hoeck

If you're at home  
sick in bed  
If you have a bad cold  
or an ache in your head

If you have a horrid disease  
or an infection in your ear  
It doesn't hardly matter  
because with God, miracles do appear

Even something as bad as cancer  
or a case of the bird flu  
Or something as short and simple as  
a bad case of the blues

Do not worry  
God can take away the pain  
He can make the bad disappear  
He will help you again and again

He'll make you a whole  
from all those little parts  
Because God can heal anything  
even a broken heart



# *The Miracle of Prayer*

By Joanne Walker

**P**rayer is the most important tool a Christian has available to use. With it, one can ask for protection, guidance, instructions in life, one's daily needs, help for others, and especially for healing.

I witnessed this heavenly miracle (healing) with my youngest daughter forty years ago. At that time, my husband had been a member of the Worldwide Church of God for seven years. Every Sabbath he took our three older children with him to church. I was not a member at that time, as I had been raised in a Catholic family, and this fact alone caused me to be a hostile wife.

We had four children, with the youngest daughter being two years old. I still remember this life-changing event as if it was yesterday. It was on a Thursday when she first became ill with an upper respiratory illness. I immediately gave her baby aspirin, applied a chest rub and used a vaporizer, and anything else I could think of. I never once thought about taking her to the family doctor, which I normally did with any of the children. When Saturday came around, she had basically stopped eating and was only taking liquids in minute amounts. Later that morning my husband took the other three children and went to church. When he came home he brought a prayer cloth, laid it on her and prayed. In Acts 19:11-12 we read, "Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them."

By Monday, she had worsened and was delirious with periods of fever and then chills that turned her lips blue. That night, the minister came over to the house and I joined the two of them in prayer as he laid hands on her to anoint her. This seemed perfectly natural to me. This is specifically mentioned in James 5:14, "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."



That Thursday, which was a week to the day of her becoming ill, my daughter was completely yellow, even the whites of her eyes. I knew this was a serious case of jaundice, which can be very dangerous. I still never once considered taking her to a doctor. During the days of her illness, I had tried my best to take care of the rest of my family, but had done no housework, except to cook and wash some clothes. The kitchen was piled high with every dish and utensil we owned. I had spent most of my waking hours sitting in a rocking chair watching and taking care of my daughter who I knew was very ill.

As we went into the second week of her being ill, the following Thursday morning, I remember the decision I had made to fast. Something I had never done before in my life, and I also decided to not tell my husband I was fasting. I also got down upon my knees in front of her crib and prayed. I asked God, "If you let my daughter live, I will spend the rest of my life telling her how great you are." The next day, Friday, my husband prepared for the Sabbath, and then on Saturday morning took the other three children and went to church again.

A few hours after they had left for church, I was doing the only thing I had been able to do the last 10 days, which was sitting in the rocking chair watching my ailing daughter struggle for her every breath. Suddenly Rebekah took a deep, deep breath that caused her

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“Daughter your faith has made you whole, go in peace.”  
Luke 8:48

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entire rib cage to rise up as far as it could go! Then she slowly exhaled, her body completely relaxed, and she fell into a deep sleep. I then noticed that her skin was returning to a normal color, and she was no longer yellow. I knew at that very instant that God had answered the prayers, and that she was healed. As I left her room, I noticed that the time was 1:00 according to the clock. I knew my family would be home soon from church, and I went to the kitchen to begin the much needed clean up.

Immediately upon my husband’s return home around 4:00, he asked how she was. I turned to him and told him that she had been healed. He asked how could I know that, and I told him that I had witnessed it, and that she was in a natural state of sleep now. He ran into the room to see for himself, and came back asking me if I knew what time I had witnessed her “healing.” I said, “Yes, exactly 1:00.” He looked at me amazed and said, “That’s the time when the minister had every one of us get down on our knees in front of our chairs.” The minister told us, “It’s time we all prayed for the complete healing of Rebekah!” We see such faith in James 15:15 as we read, “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.”

Needless to say, God had my full attention, and made a firm believer out of me. The very next Sabbath I went to church with my husband and all four of my children, including my daughter, Rebekah, who had been given back to us by the grace of God. I was baptized six months later, and have devoted my life to sharing God’s Word with her, as well as the rest of my children. Today, forty years later, Rebekah, her husband Michael, son Josh, and their newest addition to the family, Grace, who was born this month, attend CGI, and together they have learned just how great God the Father is! i

## 7. HOW CAN WE MINISTER HEALING?

- a) Hospitality allows Christ to act through His Body by making a place in our homes and/or hearts for someone hurting to receive the peace of Christ.
- b) Comfort that flows from compassion so that we can stand with a person in their suffering; to just be there, not giving advice and letting them work things out in their own way.
- c) Listening to hear their pain and accept their definition of the problem and their feelings, respect the validity of their feelings without judgement.
- d) Instruction at a teachable moment that is the precise information a person needs at a particular stage but is not of a classroom nature nor is it unsolicited advice giving. It flows out of a special relationship that is important to the person.
- e) Prayer can effect healing without medical intervention, can speed up healing (even instantaneously), lessen side effects or strengthen effects of medical interventions.
- f) Team healing ministries – are spiritually mature, motivated by compassion, knowledgeable, gifted and skilled people. They must not be incompetent or misuse their spiritual power. Called and trained to respond to request for healing, they have learned to minister better through a systematic approach.

## 8. WHAT ARE THE WOUNDS THAT NEED TO BE HEALED?

- a) Physical – skin, blood, muscles, bones, organs damaged by injury, infection, disease and congenital defects are easy to identify
- b) Emotional – feelings of fear, anxiety, resentment, etc. that cause us to react in distorted and destructive ways.
  - deprivation from insufficient displays of love
  - trauma from abuse
- c) Spiritual – wounds affect our mind’s ability to know God, our will to be able to make the right choices and our religious responses.
  - may be the result of spiritual deprivation; not being taught the basics (how to pray, who God is etc.)
  - may be the result of distorted information about spiritual things
  - spiritual trauma from being introduced to occult, organized crime, etc.
- d) Relational Wounds – from birth to death we depend on others for our very existence. Immaturity can affect our ability to establish constructive relationships with other people, God, and angels as well as wrong relationships with demons. A wound in one area means that the entire human is wounded in some way. Minor wounds may be unnoticeable but big wounds impact in many ways.

## 9. WHAT ARE OUR REMEDIES FOR HEALING?

- Natural – medical treatment, psychiatric care, nutrition counseling, exercise, listening and instruction, etc.
- Supernatural – prayer, scripture, praise, blessing, deliverance, etc.
- Combination – of natural and supernatural (e.g. first aid for injury and prayer for inner healing of fears, etc)



# ALTH & HEALING

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## 10. WHAT DOES A HEALING MINISTRY DO?

- Assessment: of the presenting problem, affect on other dimensions of person's life, core problem.
- Develop Plan: proper way to heal this person's hurts, what needs to minister to, what strategy, limitations.
- Implementation: difficulties, follow through
- Evaluation: results, success, unmet needs, further action required.

## 11. HOW DOES A TEAM MINISTER HEALING?

- Preparation of place (private, quiet, no interruptions), personal prayers, practical discussions. If impromptu, short prayer now and schedule time later with stated length of time.

- Welcome person with introductions, explanation of ministry and brief prayer. Expectations clarified and defined, boundaries set.

Confidentiality always expected and must be maintained. Obligated to keep secret everything learned about the person and others from ministry. Sacred obligation, not ours to give away because we stand in the place of Jesus, not even disclose someone has come to us. Any violation is disastrous to the entire Body of Christ and causes distrust of all ministry.

- Listen

Active listening to facts and feelings is the beginning of the healing process.

Careful listening to know if we are the right ones to pray, is this the right time to pray, what to pray for.

Good listeners are self-sacrificing as they restrain their desire to tell their story; listen with respect and unconditional love for the person. They are able to listen with serenity by praying before ministry and silently during ministry focusing attention on Christ who gives us peace.

Helpful responses by the listener include:

- indications of acceptance (nod head, etc)
- reflective responses (feedback)
- focusing responses (keep on track)
- facilitating responses (encourages going deeper)

Obstacles to being a good listener

- Anxiety from feelings of incompetence
- Misconceptions – must straighten person out
  - must solve this person's problem
  - should be able to answer all questions

Ministers of prayer must constantly listen to both the person and to God.

- Make an agreement with the person about the ministry; where ministry will take place, who will be the team members, what hurt will be ministered to, when and how long the ministry will be carried out.

- Come into the presence of the Lord with 5-10 minutes of prayer, music, and/or song.

- Minister with:

Prayers of affirmation (about 5 minutes) thanking God for this person, etc.

Prayers of intercession for specific and detailed healing. Only with permission, lay on hands.

Prayers of imagery that picture Jesus reaching out, touching injury and healing it but not to focusing on the hurt.

Prays for the solution not the problem.

Prayers of command to tell the body to heal itself where the healing is needed.

Each team member prays in different ways according to their giftedness and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Become quiet perhaps with quiet music and wait to see if Lord has a message for the person.

Ask what the person is experiencing.

Read any scriptures the Lord brings to mind.

Express God's love.

- Closure – at end of session when everyone senses that all that was needed has been done, give thanks to God for what he has done.

Ask person if anything was especially helpful and anything unhelpful.

Come to agreement if there is a need to meet again for prayer; how many more sessions to follow; where, when, etc.

Farewell and leave taking should be short. It is not a time to socialize. "We need to listen to the Lord about our ministry and to give thanks before we leave so we need to say good bye to you now."

- Debrief – team members remain for a time after the person leaves to discuss how everyone thought the session went, anything would do differently, places where God was most evident and gifts most noticeable.

Review how they functioned as a team, affirm specifically each member's ministry, emphasis on affirmation not deficiencies. Discuss future direction this person's ministry should take.

Ask if anyone feels burdened and pray for burden to be released. Give short prayer of thanks for continued growth for person, selves and team and for any further gifts needed.

Healing is a process and takes time, maybe many sessions. Prayer teams should not attempt to minister emotional healing for sexual abuse unless they have special, in-depth training for the problem. When a request cannot be met, must be careful to explain the seriousness of the matter is beyond our expertise and then find the competent help the person needs.

*This study has been adapted from Healing Ministry, A Practical Guide by Leo Thomas and Jan Alkire.*

# CONFESSION

## Only to God?

By Mike James

Many in our church tradition believe we should only confess our sins to God because there is one mediator between man and God and that is Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:5). I agree there is one mediator, but what do we do with James 5:14-16? Here it tells us to confess our sins to one another. What good can come from confession and how can it help us heal?

One example I can provide that will assist us in understanding the power of confession is found in the field of psychology. Many of the concepts we find in psychology today have a Biblical basis. One such concept is catharsis. This is the uncovering and reliving of early traumatic conflicts. One example that was provided to us in a college class involved a woman named Patty who suffered severe headaches. After it was found that nothing physical was wrong with her, she underwent psychodynamic therapy. This is therapy that helps you understand your present through your past. Once Patty built up rapport with her doctor, she was able to open up more and more about her past. What was discovered was that as a child her father had molested her. By talking about this issue she learned that her headaches dissipated. This is due to the fact that some of our physical ailments are the result of psychological or mental ailments. Many people are assisted every day by talking with counselors about past issues.

Imagine you are on your way to work and you almost get into an accident. This may shake you up a bit. When you get to work you may still be dealing with the emotional reaction you felt in dealing with the car incident. If you mention the near accident to your colleagues at work, this will help dissipate the emotional charge you are feeling and allow you to function as your true self rather than being upset or distracted from the car incident. If we bottle up all our problems inside and don't relieve the stress and guilt we feel, the stress and guilt will manifest themselves in some other way that may not be positive.

A number of years ago, a man who had killed four women fifteen years before walked

into a police station and confessed to the police what he had done. There are numerous other stories like this. The stress and mental anguish we feel from sin needs to be released. This is a natural and normal reaction that even a murderer was aware of.

The Hebrew word for confession in the Old Testament is yadah, which means to "throw a stone or arrow at or away." Confessing the sin gets rid of it for you, and you don't need to dwell on it any longer. In the Atonement day ceremony, when the sins were confessed over the live goat it was then sent away into the desert. The idea was that the sins of the community were gone for good. God understands how He has made us. He knows that we need to flush our mind of these sins and issues through discussing them with him in prayer and with our fellow brethren.

Think of it in connection with the waste we flush from our bodies each day. We take in food and drink and absorb the nutrients from these things. We then have to flush the waste of the food and drink from our system or we will build up toxicity in our bodies.

Without removing the waste we will get sick. The same is true of our mental waste—our sins and the sins that others perpetrate on us. We need to flush our minds of these issues in conversation or we will build up toxic levels of mental issues in our minds. Confessing is the flushing of this mental waste material. Notice what David says in Psalm 32:1-5. He says when he was silent (did not confess his sins) his bones or body hurt. But when he finally confessed it to God he was forgiven and his pain was gone.

When you can confess your sins and faults to others, people realize they are not alone. Others will realize no one is perfect. People can see themselves in your faults. When you allow yourself to be vulnerable through self-disclosure, it makes it easier for others to then reciprocate by opening up about themselves. This leads to people drawing closer together. And that is what God wants in His family. He wants us to grow

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# Claim it By Faith

“No, no, don’t leave me. Please don’t leave me.  
I promise I’ll be good.”

“Wake up, William, You were dreaming, no one is going to  
leave you,” my father told me as he shook me awake.

“My mommy left me,” I said.

“I know,” answered my father,  
“but you will see her again some day.”

“But I want her now,”

I sobbed, as I pulled at my dark curly hair.

By William C. Summers

I was five when my mother died of infection after a miscarriage. My nightmares had started shortly after her death. I didn’t know then how my mother had died. I just knew she was gone. I missed her so much. The nightmares were so real; they were etched on my mind so deeply that I can never forget them. I remember every detail just as clearly as if they had happened yesterday.

I also remember with great clarity, like a moving picture that plays over and over, the day my mother left for the hospital. She called all of us children to her bedside, one at a time, and told us good-bye. I remember how badly her breath smelled. I also know now she had to have been aware she was dying, and would never see any of us again, on this earth. That was in the days before “wonder drugs”—no penicillin, no sulfa drugs, nothing to fight infection.

After I got fully awake, I told my dad about the dream.

I dreamed I was on a big sandy beach. The waves were rolling in and splashing against the sand on the shore. My mother, sisters, and brothers were all there. I saw in the distance something moving slowly over the water. It was coming toward the shore. After I watched it for a while I could see it getting closer. Then I could see it was a big sailing ship. I couldn’t take my eyes off it. It came into the bay, just a little way out there. Then I saw

a boat being let down by ropes from the big sailing ship. Some men rowed the boat to the beach, where people began loading onto it. When it was full they rowed the boat back to the ship, where all those people got on. This happened two or three times. The number of people on the beach was getting smaller and smaller. Oh, Daddy, don’t make me see it again. Don’t make me think about seeing everyone leaving me on the beach by myself.

“You have to see it again, William. You have to face it in order to get rid of those nightmares.”

“Alright, Daddy. After everyone on the first and second boatload had got on the ship, the boat came back for the rest of us. My sisters, my brothers, and my mother all got in the boat. I was left on the beach alone. I was crying and shouting, but no one seemed to hear me. I ran up and down the beach waving my arms and crying, but no one heard me. No one saw me. No one even looked toward me. They all left me. I was all alone. The ship sailed away without me. Oh, Daddy, it was awful.”

The nightmares had become so vivid, so disturbing, they were destroying my sense of well-being. They were tearing me apart, my mind and my emotions.

“What can I do to help my son?” my father asked, more to himself than anyone else. (He told me this after I

was older.) He prayed, “Oh, God, give me wisdom. Show me what I can do.” He waited and prayed.

He waited and prayed some more. Finally, he heard a still small voice, “Isaiah 40.” What can that mean? he thought. He got his Bible and turned to Isaiah chapter 40. He read: “He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles, they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.” (Isaiah 40:29-31)

He was puzzled. He prayed again. “Lord, I don’t understand. How can this help my son, William? He prayed and waited. Finally he began to hear the words impressed on his mind. “They that wait.” (KJV) Slowly, ever so slowly, a thought was developing in his mind. He called me and said, “William, I want you to trust me. Will you do what I ask you to do?”

“Yes, Daddy, I will do whatever you ask me to.”

“I want you to pray and ask God to keep you from having nightmares tonight. Believe that He is going to do that. Don’t doubt. Tomorrow, thank Him for answering prayer. Do the same thing over every day. Pray, wait, and

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times, people do not get healed. This could be because they do not have the faith to trust in God's redemptive power to heal their diseases or it could be because God has a better plan for them.

### **PRAYER OF INTERCESSION**

There are instances when the prayer of the brethren speeds up the process of healing in a person's life. James 5:14-15 reiterates the importance of the prayers of other Christians in the healing of an individual:

"Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayers offered in faith will make the sick person well..."

This is referred to as prayer of intercession, where a group of devoted Christians serve as "intermediaries" for a person who desires God's healing.

These intercessors exercise faith in God on behalf of the individual for His intervention. In a way every Christian is an intercessor praying for the restoration of our broken world. We can intercede for our friends, families, and loved ones for God's healing power.

As God's chosen people, people He created in His image and likeness, we need restoration when we break away from the way God wants our lives to be lived. But as a loving father would always love his children, so has He loved us. His redemptive work on Calvary is still active today. He wants us to believe in His power to heal us of our diseases and more importantly cleanse us from the source of brokenness.

Jehovah Rapha! God is indeed our healer but the decision is ours! **■**

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mindful of them.

Your loving acts such as visiting can make the situation of the sick better. But can you actually cure them? Remember one thing: the Bible does not say that healing must always be caused by a miracle; you can contribute to their welfare by ordinary means. In describing Christian good deeds in the early third century, Bardesan in Syria included healthy workers giving toward the support of the ill, while one martyr for the Faith around AD 165 noted that it was common for church funds to be used to relieve Christians in financial need due to illness. Even the most ordinary person can donate to Christian medical missions and hospitals and thus cure (help) the sick

While the church fathers saw no miracle was involved in visiting and donating toward the sick, they usually considered actual cures to be miracles and thus evidence of divine power, but did not regard it as necessary for every healing to be supernatural. Divine love was the only essential ingredient for all cures. This is shown by a second-century instruction that patients are to give testimony to God for all healings, even when the cure came about through drugs.

According to John 14:12, whoever believes in Jesus, will do greater works than His. Although people gifted with the grace of divine healing have never been plentiful, certainly not all Christians, the Bible and church fathers state that anyone at all can do great works equal in love and mercy to those of Christ. By visiting the sick, taking care of their bodies, and helping with their finances, we can all make the sick better and so fulfill the law of God. **■**

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closer together as a church family and opening up and confessing to each other can help us in this process.

Now of course you don't want to tell everyone everything there is to know about you. Some people are not mature enough and are likely to tell others about your problems who don't need to know. But there should be some close members of the church you can go to with your issues and concerns. As you become closer with others through fellowship, more and more people can become friends you can confess to. Fellowship is so important because it helps build trust, which then provides the opportunity for confession.

The pages of your Bible teach that we need to not only confess to God, but also confess to one another. God knows this outward expression to other believers we can trust can assist us in being more complete and open human beings. Once we are OK mentally, we can then help others in the world who are suffering. Being able to open up with those suffering in the world is made easier if we have been practicing it with those in our church family. **■**

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thank Him for taking away the nightmares. I will remind you every day."

Every morning after that, my father asked, "Did you sleep well, William?"

"And every morning I answered, "Yes, I did, Daddy." From then on, every time I was afraid to go to bed, for fear the nightmares would return, I would pray and ask God to keep them away. I trusted Him, and He never failed me.

I never had those nightmares again. I praise God every day for that. And I praise Him for giving me an earthly father who loved God enough to be concerned about me. My dad was a father who loved me enough to seek help in the promises of God.

God has been so good to me for many, many years. I have so much to praise Him for. The Scripture passage, Isaiah 40, is not one usually used for healing, but those words, "He would renew our strength," were strongly impressed on me as a child. These are healing words both spiritual and physical. God makes the promise. Our part is to claim it by faith. **■**



# Coping with Tragedy

## BEFORE & AFTER

By Jeremy Brown

**H**ow do we go about healing after tragedy strikes? Many of us know the feeling of losing a loved one. We as humans tend to want to know why the tragic event happened or why it happened to that person. It is hard to accept things when one does not know the reason as to why it happened, and will often point the finger at God. “For I, the LORD your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, ‘Fear not, I am the one who helps you’” (Isaiah 41:13). We say God allowed this tragedy to happen to me because of my sins, because of my lack of faith I am being punished, and any other excuse you can think of. The Bible states the Devil is the root of “all evil” and God is the root of all good things.

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though its waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling. There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, just at the break of dawn. The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved; He uttered His voice, the earth melted. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Come, behold the works of the LORD, Who has made desolations in the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariots in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth! The LORD of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge” (Psalm 46, NKJV).

There are many scriptures declaring God’s innocence during the times of tragedy. We have to realize you can be Satan’s martyr by blaming God for tragedy, or you can be God’s martyr by becoming stronger in your faith, during tragedy and all other aspects of life.

The best way to deal with tragedy is to think ra-

tionally. For example, a family loses a baby and some friends come to comfort the family. They tell the couple they lost their unborn child because God is punishing them for past sins. That is irrational thinking. Why would God kill a child or your loved one to punish you for past sins? If you think rationally, you would think God would not do that, and that if he did punish us he would punish that particular sinner, not the sinner’s loved ones.

Always remind yourself that many tragedies are the result of “time and unforeseen occurrence” (Ecclesiastes 9:11). Jesus gave an example of this when he spoke of the collapse of a tower in Siloam, where eighteen people were killed. Jesus made it clear that the “victims of this disaster were not being punished by God.” They died because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time (Luke 13:1-5). Meditating on this fact may help you to cope better when disasters happen. I can truly say the above scriptures helped me cope with the death of a young girl I knew.

The young girl was seventeen years old, a senior in high school, very active, on the dance team, and was well liked. She had been battling pneumonia, but she actually overcame the pneumonia, and a week later she died of heart failure. It was such a shock to the local community, but the online CGI Bible study I viewed on tragedy helped me to think rationally.

We all know the natural process for humans: we all must die one day; we just want our loved ones to die of old age, not pneumonia, diabetes, heart attacks, accidents, etc. Clear thinking can prevent you from becoming angry with God, for the things that took place. “...Father of mercies and God of all comfort.” When tragedy strikes we should draw closer to God, keep doing our daily routines, and keep attending services, not pulling away in anger. “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God can not be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.” Truly we should prepare ourselves for more tragedies, since we live in what the Bible calls “terrible times” (2 Timothy 3:1-5). **i**

in the next issue:

# PRIDE & HUMILITY

Fall 2007

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