

WHY PEOPLE ARE NOT HEALED

This is a problematic area for all those involved in praying for healing. Why are some healed and others not? What can we say to those that do not receive the healing they sought from God?

Two common answers that are often given are:

- If you had enough faith you would be healed.
- This is my cross to bear.

Both represent **bad theology** and need to be addressed. Faith is certainly a critical component to answered prayer. In fact, God loves faith and it is impossible to please God without faith (*Heb 11:6*). However, to make healing an absolute of the atonement is a cruel theology in practice. In essence, it places the blame on the supplicant saying, “God would heal you if you had more faith.” This can produce guilt and a sense of unworthiness. This “name it, claim it” theology was rampant in the 70’s and early 80’s and has done untold damage to many who sought God’s healing touch. Yes, “by His stripes we are healed” (*Isaiah 53*) and yes, we can expect God to heal us because of the cross of Christ. But we are not to assign blame or guilt when we don’t “see” the particular result desired.

The “cross to bear” theology is completely opposite scripture. Nowhere in the ministry of Jesus or in the early church do we find this. Jesus did not go around giving people disease or encouraging suffering (mental, physical or spiritual) as a means of glorifying God. Instead it is exactly the opposite. Healing was a sign of God’s Kingdom reversing the results of the fall and the works of Satan. In *Acts 10:38* Peter boldly declares that, “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.”

Prejudices Against Healing

This category represents mindsets against healing that have been taught in churches or based on conclusions made because of experiences (mostly bad).

- **We want nothing to do with “faith healers.”** This prejudice arises from frauds that misrepresent healing for sordid gain. They are con artists who masquerade under a false pretense and take advantage of the desperate with bogus healings and then seek huge offerings. Characteristically these meetings are highly emotional. Unfortunately, this has turned many a good, honest Christian away from the healing ministry. The credibility of

these “faith healers” is basically low and the ministries are usually driven by charismatic “personalities.”

- **My Sickness is sent from God.** Unfortunately, this has been taught in many churches for years. The “cross to bear” theology (mentioned above) sees God as one who afflicts us for our own good. Clearly, this is not consistent with the message and ministry of Jesus.
- **It takes a Saint to work a Miracle and I am no Saint.** Unworthiness, lack of holiness, and thinking only the elite can heal has limited the healing ministry in many places. Far too many disqualify themselves from being used of God in this ministry because they believe they are inferior.
- **We don’t need signs and wonders any more.** Again, many churches teach that all the miracles ended with the “apostolic age.” They maintain that God used the miracles in the early church to get it all going. When the Apostles died and the Bible was written the age of miracles ended. God had made His point through Jesus and the Apostles. Unfortunately, these churches miss out on the untold blessings God would send.
- **Miracles did not take place; they only represent a primitive way of expressing reality.** For the intellectual elite there is a flat out denial that any of this took place. The possibility of God doing something beyond science, medicine, and reason is simply an insult to the modern world. In essence, we have come of age and evolved from these primitive concepts.

This can be summarized by the following:

- God ordinarily does not heal.
- Besides, most healing is fake and they are only after your money.
- Even if He could, it would not be done through the likes of you.
- There is really no need for this any more; we have the record in the Bible.
- Of course, it is only for the weak minded and the pre-scientific anyway.
- If you are sick, choose the cross, it is a higher way. Accept it and be like Christ.

A Place to Begin

- First – it is God’s normative will for healing as a major part of the New Covenant.
- Second – healing gives glory to God and demonstrates His power and love.
- Third – healing touches broken humanity at every level – body, soul, spirit.
- Fourth – healing was central to the ministry of Jesus and central to demonstrating His Lordship.
- Fifth – healing was central to the ministry of the early church.
- Sixth – healing is recorded in Church history in every age.
- Seventh – healing is still needed today and is major means of church growth.

All that being said – we still must address the reality that not every one prayed for receives the healing. Here are some general guidelines.

Meeting God’s Requirements

In many cases the healing comes after biblical and scriptural conditions are met. Forgiveness is often a central factor in healing. The confession of sin, renouncing the occult, releasing bitterness, resentment, anger, and hatred is all part of the healing process. Often times these conditions must be met before God acts.

Sickness and Identity

Some people really don’t want to get well. For some the attention of being sick and having others “tend” to them meets social and relational needs. They believe if they get well they will lose the relationships that meet those needs. It is safer and more secure to stay sick, healing is too risky.

Natural Cure

God is very practical. People that come to God for healing may be asked to change a bad habit or adapt a healthier life style. There are a good percentage of health problems that could be “healed” by diet, exercise and basic common sense. God often uses the medical community and the natural process of healing instead of the “supernatural.”

Redemptive Suffering

“God causes all things to work together for good” (*Romans 8:28*). This is a mystery, however, God can and does use circumstances in our lives that are painful and difficult for His eternal purposes. People who have “gone through” trials with the Lord are often used mightily in ministry for others facing the same trials. It is not uncommon to hear testimony where people actually offer

thanks to God for what they have suffered because of a greater good that resulted. This is a mystery to be sure; however, it can be part of our journey.

Wrong Diagnosis

In the healing ministry it is important to “discern” what is really going on. The cause may be a persons “sin”; it may be a generational curse, it may be a demonic influence, it may have to do with inner healing. Frances MacNutt developed the following chart to help get an accurate diagnosis for how to pray.

SICKNESS	CAUSE	PRAYER REMEDY	APPROPRIATE SACRAMENT OR SACRAMENTAL	ORDINARY HUMAN REMEDY
(1)...of the <i>spirit</i> -often contributing to emotional sickness-sometimes contributing to bodily sickness	Personal sin	Repentance	Penance	
(2)...of the <i>emotions</i> -often contributing to spiritual sickness-often contributing to bodily sickness	Original Sin-e.g., <i>the person has been hurt by the sins of others</i>	Prayer for <i>Inner Healing</i>	<i>Penance</i>	Counseling - (psychiatric and spiritual)
(3)...of the <i>body</i> -often contributing to emotional sickness-sometimes contributing to spiritual sickness	Disease, accidents, psychological stress	<i>Prayer of Faith</i> for physical healing	<i>Anointing of the Sick</i>	Medical care
(4)...any, or all of the above can, upon occasion, be	<i>Demonic</i> in its cause	<i>Prayer of Deliverance</i> (Exorcism)	<i>Exorcism</i>	
*Chart taken from <i>Healing</i> , by Fr. Francis MacNutt, Ave Maria Press, Nortre Dame, Indiana, 1974				

In summary, we can say that the most basic questions we should ask before praying for healing are:

- What is the *basic sickness*, the basic problem?
- What is its *basic cause*?
- What *kind of prayer*, or what kind of other remedy should we use?