

We believe discipleship is a direction  
not a destination.



---

**Prayer: Does it Make a Difference**

**Week 8**

# Course Outline

- **Prayer Dilemmas**

- ~~Week 7 Ch 16-17~~

- ~~Unanswered prayer, whose fault is it~~

- ~~Living with not knowing~~

- **Week 8 Ch 18-19**

- Prayer and healing

- What to pray for if not healing



# Course Outline

- **The Practice of Prayer**
  - **Week 9 Ch 20-22**
    - How do I pray?
    - Should I “forward this prayer”
    - Rule #1 Love the Lord your God
  - **Week 10 Review, Conclusions**



# Prayer Dilemmas

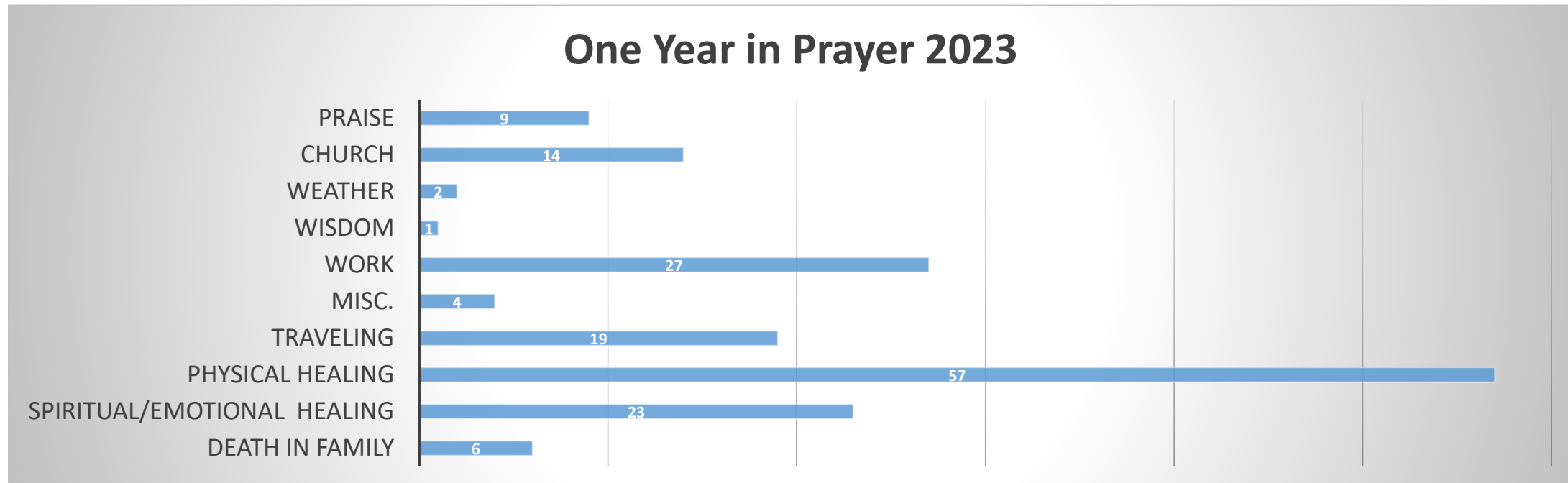
## *Prayer and Physical Healing*

Chapter 18



# One Year of Prayer, In a Class

- What does one year in prayer look like?

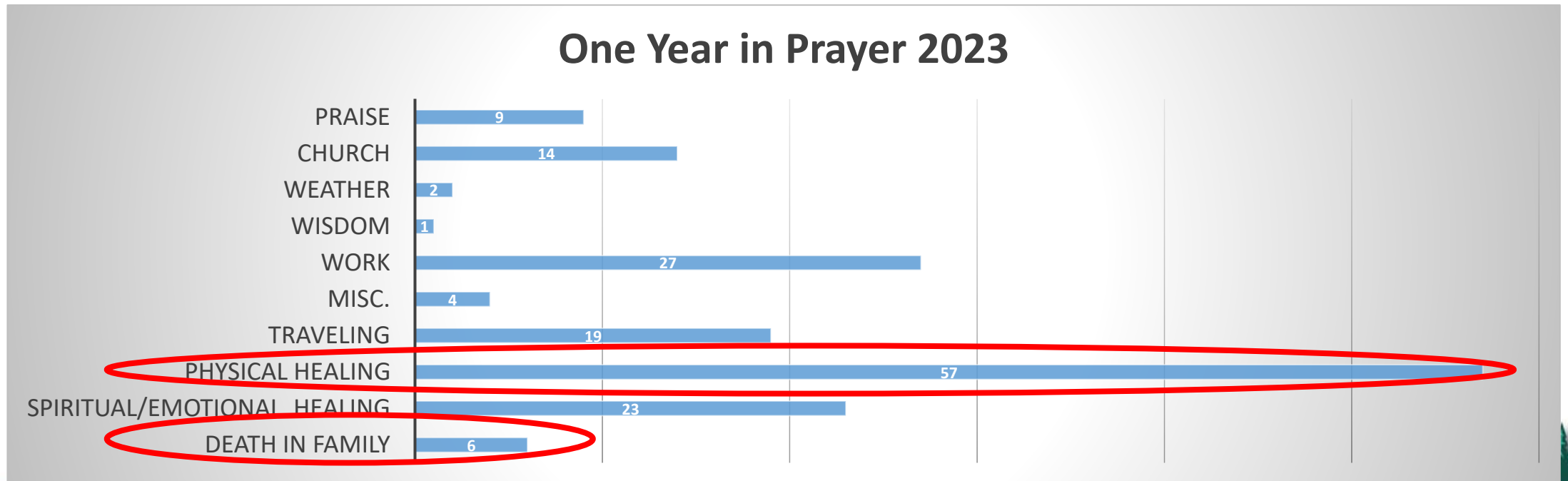


# Majority of Prayer?

- What does this say about people's hearts/needs?
  - People seek God out for healing
- Of all of these prays how many were answered with a miraculous YES!
  - None
    - By the definition of miraculous
  - Some saw healing
    - But not over night

# Death

- The truth
  - Several of the prayers for healing ended in death



# Majority of Prayer?

- How do the people who prayed for healing for a loved one feel when their loved one dies?
- Or healing does not come
  - Was it a lack of faith by the person?
    - Or the person praying?
- NO!
  - But then why?





# Promises

- We have promises in the Bible that say “with the faith of a mustard seed...”
  - Context Brad! Context!
- But people struggle with prayer and healing
  - Facts: God can and does perform miraculous healings in people
  - Facts: It is not on the majority of people
    - Let’s discuss these people



# -From Cultic to Mainstream-

- When you hear “Faith Healing” what do you think of?
  - The crazy TV preachers of the 70s and 80s
  - The fad of, don’t take your kids to the doctor
    - That shows a lack of faith
      - There were news stories and criminal cases from this
- What about now? What does the mainstream say?

# INITIATIVE ON HEALTH, SPIRITUALITY, AND RELIGION

- [Home](#)
- [Aims ▾](#)
- [Faculty](#)
- [Research ▾](#)
- [Events/Videos ▾](#)
- [Resources ▾](#)
- [Donate](#)
- [Contact Us](#)



## Spirituality and medicine: a surprising pairing

Howard Koh explains why health, religion, and spirituality are all part of what it is to be human.



# INITIATIVE ON HEALTH, SPIRITUALITY, AND RELIGION

- [Home](#)
- [Aims ▾](#)
- [Faculty](#)
- [Research ▾](#)
- [Events/Videos ▾](#)
- [Resources ▾](#)
- [Donate](#)
- [Contact Us](#)



## Spirituality linked with better health outcomes, patient care

Spirituality should be integrated into care for serious illness and overall health according to a study by Harvard researchers.





## INITIATIVE ON HEALTH, SPIRITUALITY, AND RELIGION

[Home](#)

[Aims](#) ▾

[Faculty](#)

[Research](#) ▾

[Events/Videos](#) ▾

[Resources](#) ▾

[Donate](#)

[Contact Us](#)



### The effects of forgiveness on our mental health

Tyler VanderWeele was interviewed by NECN about the findings of a new forgiveness study.



# -The Inbuilt Miracle-

- How did this “fringe” healing come to the mainstream?
  - Through the scientific method
- Researchers started performing double blind studies on
  - Prayer and health
    - People were assigned who to pray for and not
    - The patient and family didn’t know which group they were in



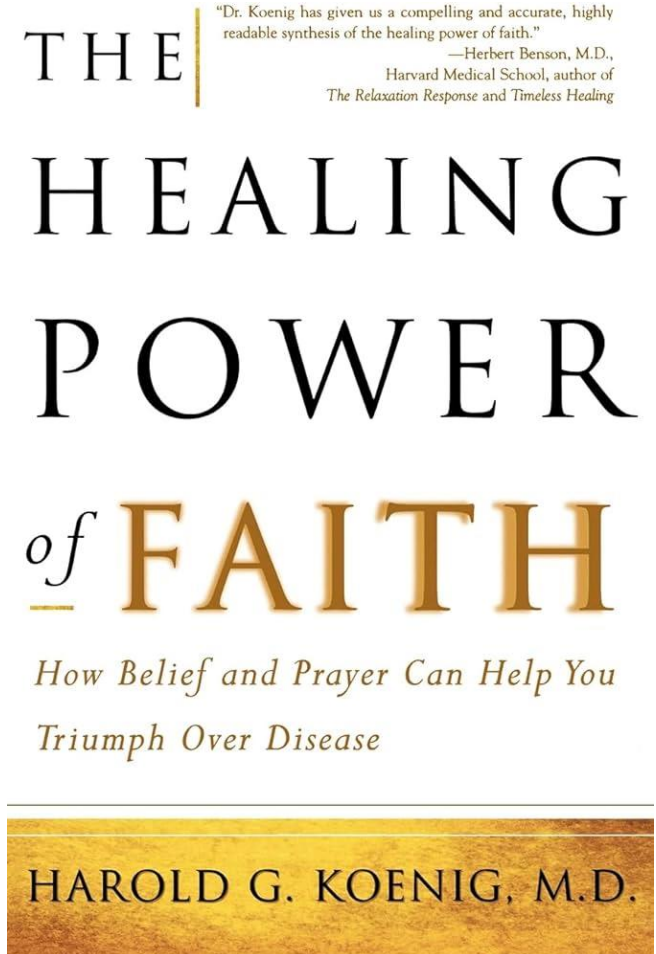
# The Inbuilt Miracle

- The results?
  - In one heart-attack patient test (1989)
    - 10 percent of those prayed for had fewer complications
    - And less deaths
- There have been several other studies with similar results
  - \*\*\* Some question the methods and others have contradictory results



# The Inbuilt Miracle

- Dr. Harold G. Koenig, a psychiatrist who directs Duke University's Center for the Study of Religion/Spirituality and Health
- Autor of *The Healing Power of Faith*
- Some of the book's chapters





# The Inbuilt Miracle

- Religious People Have Stronger Marriages and Families
- Religious People Have Healthy Lifestyles
- Religious People Cope Well with Stress
- Religious People Live Longer, Healthier Lives
- Religion May Protect People from Serious Cardiovascular Disease
- Religious People May Have Stronger Immune Systems
- Religious People Use Fewer Expensive Hospital Services



# The Inbuilt Miracle

- How do you think this doctor came to these conclusions?
  - A lot of this is due to our faith and actions
    - Christians in general
      - Smoke less
      - Drink less
      - Engage in promiscuous sex less
      - Have a supporting community
        - To help cope with life



# The Inbuilt Miracle

- Scientist are looking at the inbuilt “features” of our body and how it fights off sickness
  - Some scientists call all this psychosomatic
    - Its just your mind telling your body it is getting better
      - So it does
- Not a miracle, just your body, that God created
  - Healing itself



# -Suspending Nature-

- But what about MIRACLES!
  - Does God intervene supernaturally?
    - YES!
    - But
- What about all the laws and rules in our world
  - God also created this world, and its controls
    - That we can not change, only observe and work with



# Suspending Nature

- What are some of the laws/rules of this world?
  - The Sun will rise and set everyday
  - If I throw an apple in the air, it will come back down
  - If I drink in excess, I will have health/relationship/law problems
  - If my arteries are clogged, I am going to have health issues
  - If I ...



# Suspending Nature

- We know these things, and seldom pray to change them
  - I don't pray for blue eyes
    - Because that is not how God made my eyes
  - I don't build my house next to an active volcano
    - And then pray it doesn't erupt
- What are some things you don't pray for because that is not how God made it?



# Suspending Nature

- Are there times we ask God to suspend nature
  - Again yes, and sometimes God does
- Don't forget God created all the things around us
  - And sometimes we are asking God to change the things He made



# -What Makes the Difference-

- Why are there more miracles at certain times and in certain places?
- What makes miracles more likely to happen?
  - Are there rules that will help increase the chance for miracles?
    - There seems to be more miracles, specifically of the healing type, in developing countries





# What Makes the Difference

- If I
  - Make less than \$10,000 a year
  - Am below 5 or above 80 years old
  - Have a really sad life story
- I have a better chance of a miracle
  - Maybe
  - But maybe not



# What Makes the Difference

- During Jesus' ministry there was a lot of miracles
  - But not for everyone
    - Why did Jesus feed a group only twice
    - What about all the other hungry people?
- Jesus did not come to this world to change the laws of nature
  - Or make "better" laws
  - Yet



# What Makes the Difference

- With this said it is unreasonable to try and create “rules” were by God **must** perform a miracle



# What Makes the Difference

- Philip Yancy talked about creating false hope in healing
  - What do you think he means?
    - Do we build up hope in people to the point they
      - Ignore all other options and only believe a “miracle” will happen
    - That people start believing miracles happen everyday
      - For everyone all the time
  - Is this a healthy thing?



# -Checklist for Healing-

- “Sickness, not health, is the abnormality that Jesus came to expose. While not solving all the problems on earth, Jesus’ miracles gave a clear sign of how the world should be, and someday will be. His acts of healing restored to specific individuals what had been spoiled on the planet as a whole.”



# Checklist for Healing

- “At the same time, I have seen great damage that results when we presume upon God. The Bible gives examples of prayers answered and unanswered, of illnesses healed and unhealed. We dare not raise expectations so high as to virtually guarantee a crashing disappointment. In search of the proper balance, when I desire and pray for a miracle I ask myself a series of questions.”



# Checklist for Healing

- **Am I expecting a miracle as an entitlement**
  - Do you believe you have a higher chance for a miracle because you are a Christian?
- **Am I using the benefits of God’s “common grace” — the healing built into our bodies and the medical knowledge we have gained?**
  - Are you going to doctors for healing
  - Are you doing the things your body needs to heal



# Checklist for Healing

- **Do I wrongly blame God for causing the suffering**
  - Does God cause suffering or is it sin in this world
  - God caused my lung cancer, or smoking for 30 years?
  - Place the blame where the blame lies





# Checklist for Healing

- **Am I prepared for the possibility that physical healing may not take place**
  - This must be the hardest of them all
  - Can I accept that Gods answer to my prayer is no
    - You will have this ailment the rest of your life
    - No, your father will die from this, soon



# Checklist for Healing



- Sunday April 30, 2023 my class prayed for my dads pneumonia
- Things got worse quickly
- June 17, 2023 he died
- Sometimes healing doesn't take place

# Prayer Dilemmas

## *What to Pray For*

Chapter 19



# What to Pray For

- After all the talk of what happens if prayers aren't answered
  - Do you wonder what we should pray about?
    - Heart Desire
    - Lament
    - Confession
    - Peace
    - God's Presence
    - Compassion
    - Gratitude
    - Faith
    - Grace



# -Heart Desire-

- Pray for exactly what you want no matter how impossible
  - Religious freedom in China
  - Direct healing for your child's cancer
  - Republicans and Democrats working together
- If you earnestly desire it
  - And believe God does also
    - Pray!



# -Lament-

- Express sorrow, regret or unhappiness
  - Mary and Martha, as different as they were
    - They both lament to Jesus
      - If you were just here!!!
    - The Bible, specifically Psalms, is full of lament
- Sometimes grief and sorrow take time to process
  - What better way then with God



# -Confession-

- Sin disrupts our relationship with God
  - Confession restores that relationship
    - I admit “I am wrong”
      - The hardest three words in the English language
  - This also realigns our place with God
  - There is one prayer that God will always answer Yes to
    - Forgive me



# -Peace-

- Have you ever had a question you were worried about asking, of your wife, husband, boss?
  - You wrung yourself out worried over asking
- People pray this way sometimes. Why?
  - Worry over the answer to their question
- Jesus said “Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28





# Peace

- When we change the direction of our prayers
  - Starting with God, getting to know God
    - His love, His will
  - Our questions, our requests may look less daunting
    - God cares about my sick father
    - God cares about the people in this country
  - I also care for these things
    - Why wouldn't God want to hear what I think?



# -God's Presence-

- Pray for God's presence to be felt
  - This felt presence may come and go
    - But it is always there
- Pray that your eyes are open to see God's presence in others
  - We are often blind to those around us
    - So look and pray to see God



# -Compassion-

- Pray for compassion
  - And pray with compassion
- What does this mean?
  - In our own troubles we can become blind to those around us
    - Their needs, troubles, worries
- As I've been told its not all about you Brad

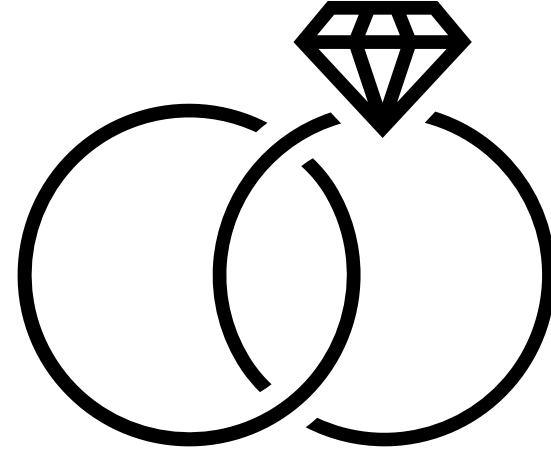


# -Gratitude-

- What does it mean to be grateful?
  - It means being thankful for what you have
  - How often do we focus on what we don't have
    - And what does that do to us
      - Makes us bitter and unhappy
- <sup>16</sup> Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup> pray constantly, <sup>18</sup> give thanks in everything; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18
- So thank God for what HE has done

# -Faith-

- What does fidelity mean?
  - Faithful, loyal, trustworthy
  - Think of the perfect marriage
    - No matter the pain, sickness, deaths,...
    - No matter what happens I will stay with you, and I will trust you
- Pray for faith that surpasses all reasonable circumstances



# -Grace-

- What does it mean to pray for grace?
  - Yancy gives several examples of people going through hard times
  - But not succumbing to their natural inclination of
    - Anger, bitterness, revenge, ...
- These people come out, or continue in, their circumstance with
  - Joy, peace, love, kindness



# -Grace-

- But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness.” 2 Corinthians 12:9
  - Grace is Gods unmerited assistance
- When someone asks, “How can you have joy during this trial”
  - Answer with “Gods grace”



# Closing Thoughts

- God created rules in the universe that we work with in
  - Sometimes God will intervene and break those rules
  - Sometimes, maybe most of the time
    - God does not “break” the rules but lets his design work
    - Sometimes we just don’t see the miracle around us
      - Our own human bodies capability to heal
      - God created this body and all it can do





# Course Outline

- **The Practice of Prayer**
  - **Week 9 Ch 20-22**
    - How do I pray?
    - Should I “forward this prayer”
    - Rule #1 Love the Lord your God
  - **Week 10 Review, Conclusions**



We believe discipleship is a direction  
not a destination.



---

**Prayer: Does it Make a Difference**

**Week 8**