

EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT DIVINE HEALING

The subject of divine healing is controversial. It is not my purpose in anyway to put down anybody, to build up anybody, or to be pro-charismatic or anti-charismatic, but to be pro-Bible and pro-Jesus, and to say what I most assuredly believe after much prayer and years of study on the teaching of God's Word. I do not preach through the eyes of prejudice or denominationalism, but I preach out of a heart that I pray is enlightened of the Spirit and the Word and without any ax to grind, without any thought of promoting a sectarian position, but only promoting what I believe to be the total truth which sets men free and which the world desperately needs in our hour.

I. There are two very extreme views regarding divine healing:

- A. **One view says there is no such thing as miraculous healing.** They say that the only healing that takes place is through applied medical science or established natural laws. This is a very broad opinion in liberal churches. If you have had any exposure or experience with liberal theology, you won't find much place for miraculous healing because they cannot believe in the supernatural.
- B. **Another extreme view says that God doesn't want anyone to be sick,** and that God wants to heal all sickness, and if you're sick today and not healed it's because of sin or unbelief.
- C. **The "in between" position says God indeed heals but His healing is in His sovereign hand and purpose.** He does it selectively. He does it for His glory. When He does it, He does it to edify the body of Christ and to bring eternal praise to His name. The Scriptures answer some very important questions on the matter of healing.

II. The first question is WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF ILLNESS OR SICKNESS?

There are four main causes:

- A. **The first cause and of course the overriding cause is SIN.** All sickness can be traced directly or indirectly to sin. If Adam had not sinned, there would not be any sickness. If you are a Christian you are going to a world where there won't be any sickness, not even a toothache. In the meantime, we don't live in this kind of world. Now it doesn't necessarily mean that if you are sick, it's due to your own personal sin, but on the other hand, sin could very well be the problem. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11:30, "You are sick because you sinned around the Lord's table." There are a lot of blind children in the world because their mother sinned by committing an immoral act which resulted in the contraction of a venereal disease.
- B. **A second cause is SENILITY or old age - the aging process.** Because of sin, everything is winding down and in a state of gradual decay. Science calls this the second law of thermo dynamics. The whole universe is gradually dying because of sin.

- C. **A third cause is SATAN.** In Luke 13:11-16 Jesus speaks of a woman who for 18 years was ill and He says in verse 16, “Satan has bound lo these 18 years. Be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day.” And He freed her from a spirit of infirmity. Another example is found in 2 Corinthians 12:7 where Paul says that he was given a thorn in the flesh, “a messenger of Satan” to buffet him.
- D. **A fourth cause is the SOVEREIGNTY of God.** Some would say God never causes illness and that may be true, but God permits sickness and He has a purpose in it.
- a. Hebrews 12:10 says that He permits it to make us holy.
 - b. Psalm 119:71 says He permits it to bring us to obedience.
 - c. John 11:4 says he permits it that He might glorify Himself in the eyes of men.

You cannot, on the basis of Scripture, say that God does not use illness at times. This is not to say that God does not heal a lot of people who are sick. God is not glorified in illness generally, but we must take all Scripture on the subject. If we get hung up on certain Scriptures and ignore others, there will be an imbalance, God will not bless it, and it could ultimately hurt our own health as well as that of others.

- III. **Is Physical Healing in the Atonement and in the Resurrection?** This is a fundamental question and some would doubt this. Isaiah 53:4 says, “Surely He” (speaking of the Messiah to come) has born our griefs.” That Hebrew word means physical illness “and carried our sorrows.” That word means mental anxiety. Matthew 8:16-17 says that Scripture was literally fulfilled in the healing ministry of Jesus. Matthew 8:16, “When the even was come they brought unto Him many that were possessed of devils,” (or demons) and He cast out the spirits with His word and healed all that were sick that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet saying, “He took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.” You have the promise in Isaiah 53:4 – you have the fulfillment in Matthew 8:16-17.

Now we are not to conclude from this that because healing is in the atonement that everyone is going to be healed in this life. Sinless perfection is in the atonement, but not many of us are going to attain it in this life. An immortal body is in the atonement but that must await the world to come. There are some people who will not be healed in this world but will be healed at death, and in the resurrection and that’s the greatest healing of all.

- IV. **Did Jesus Heal Everybody?** There are Scriptures that indicate that He healed the multitudes. Matthew 8:16 said, “And healed all that were sick.” We find the same teaching in Luke 4:40 and Luke 6:19. It says He healed “all.” Then there are other Scriptures that indicate He didn’t always heal “all.” In John 5:3, Jesus comes to the pool of Bethesda, “there was a multitude of impotent folk – blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.” Here it says Jesus healed only “one” of that multitude. It was very obvious that they all needed healing but He healed only one at that time.

- V. **Did the Apostles Heal Everybody?** There are four notable cases of people they did not heal.
- (a) In 2 Corinthians 12:9 Paul did not heal himself.
 - (b) Paul did not heal Timothy though he was a believing man and a good man. In 1 Timothy 5:23, Paul speaks to Timothy of his stomach trouble and his often infirmities.
 - (c) II Timothy 4:20, Paul says he left Trophimus in Miletum sick.
 - (d) Phil. 2:27, Paul did not heal Epaphroditus, another assistant.

- VI. **Did Jesus Christ Use Medicine as A Means for Healing?** In John 9:6, Jesus made a mud pack of clay and anointed the eyes of the blind man. Could Jesus have healed him without the mud pack? Of course He could have, but He chose to use the mud pack. For centuries it's been known that the mud pack is therapeutic on wounds. I've used it myself – it works. The wisdom of the ages has taught man this.

One of the most interesting things in Scripture is the healing of Hezekiah in the 38th chapter of Isaiah verse 5. Hezekiah prays for healing and the Lord says "I'm going to add fifteen years to your life." In verse 21 it says, "For Isaiah said, "Let them take a lump of figs" – what we would call a poultice – "and lay it for a plaster upon the boil and he shall recover." Though God said, "I'm going to heal him" he used a poultice or the fig cake to bring about the healing. The Scripture definitely endorses medical means. Did Jesus use medicine? Did the apostles use medicine? Sometimes they did, sometimes they didn't and of course that would be true of Jesus as well. Probably most of the time Jesus did not, but He was not against using medicine.

- VII. **Did the Apostles Use Medicine?** The answer is yes. In 1 Timothy 5:23, Paul says, "Take a little wine for the stomach's sake and thy often infirmities." Wine was medicinal. In Acts 28:8-9, you find one of the most amazing statements on miracle and medical healing. "And it came to pass that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed and laid his hands on him and healed him." From this verse one can see that it is very Scriptural to lay hands on the sick for healing. In verse 9, it says, "So when this was done others also, which had diseases in the island, came and were healed." Notice it says that Publius was healed in verse 8, and others were healed in verse 9, but the word "healed" is entirely different in these two verses. The word healed in verse 8 is the Greek word which means "miraculous, divine healing." Paul laid his hands on him and he was miraculously healed. The word for "healed" in verse nine is the word "*therapeuo*." This is where we get our word "therapy." "*Therapeuo*" means the healing of medicine. So we see in verse 8, Paul administers miraculous divine healing without medicine. In verse 9, Luke practices medicine. Luke was with Paul, and this is my logical deduction. This is one of the most beautiful examples in the Bible of how God heals directly without medicine, and then through human instrumentality. All healing is of God!

- VIII. **Does Jesus Christ Miraculously Heal Today Without Medicine?** Indeed He does. There is no Scripture that says Jesus ceased His healing with the apostolic period. The ministry of Jesus is three-fold, according to Matthew 4:23 it's, "teaching, preaching, and

healing.” Has that ministry ceased to be three-fold? No. Jesus ministers to the total man. He ministers to the soul, mind, and the body. The gift of healing belongs to the church today. There is no Scripture that says the gift of healing is not a miraculous gift. Jesus is healing many people today miraculously.

IX. **Are We Justified Today in Praying for Miraculous Divine Healing?** Sure! Nowhere does the Bible say you can pray for certain things but have to exclude the miraculous – that you have to exclude healing. The great prayer promises of the Lord prove this. In John 14:14, Jesus says, “ye shall ask anything if my name, I will do it.” “Anything” covers healing. In Mark 11:24, did Jesus say, “Whatsoever things ye desire, except healing?” Oh no. He said, “Whatsoever things ye desire when ye pray, believe ye receive them, and you have them.” Philippians 4:6 says, “In everything by prayer and supplication and thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God.” Prayer for healing is one of the most legitimate types of praying.

X. **Should We Pray For Miraculous Healing Before We Seek Healing from Medicine?** Yes. There is a Scripture that indicates this to my satisfaction in the Old Testament. 2 Chronicles 16:12-13, “And Asa, in the 39th year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians. And Asa slept with his fathers and died in the 41st year of his reign. This says to me that he could have been healed had he consulted the Lord, but he did not. He went to the physicians and he died.

John R. Rice was a great crusader for the Bible all his life. He said he was facing illness and he contacted a surgeon who had set date for surgery when his eyes fell upon this Scripture in Chronicles chapter 16. He said when he read it, he realized that he had not prayed for divine healing. The Lord convicted his heart and said, “You have sinned against the Lord. You didn’t even ask me to heal you.” At that point, he repented and asked the Lord to heal him so he wouldn’t need the operation and the Lord heard his prayer and healed him.

Are there people today who could be healed without going to the doctor? No question. Surely the Lord is grieved when we do not take our illnesses to Him before we take them to anybody on earth. God wants to be honored in His power and in His grace.

XI. **Does Satan Heal?** This is a mysterious realm indeed. Can Satan heal? How do you distinguish between divine healing and demonic healing? I would not say that I agree entirely with this statement, but I think it’s a good answer to this question. Pastor Evangelist Barry Wood believes in miraculous healing and believes it is one of the great, neglected ministries of the New Testament Church. In his statement, he is simply giving a caution against an extreme which we need to beware of in this day of the occult and demonic. He says, “Not all healing is of God. There is such a thing as demonic healing. Satan can temporarily heal. All real healing is of God but Satan can produce psychic healing. Some of what passes off as healing by faith healers is in this category. Have you noticed that the kind of healings that are claimed are in the marginal areas? You don’t see many claims of healing for terminal cancer or other fatal diseases. Healings are

mostly in the areas of emotional disorders or crippling diseases like arthritis. Not all those who claim healing are healed or stay healed.”

The question comes to mind, “Why would Satan heal anyone?” Healing is a good thing so why would the devil do a good thing? Again, we need to realize that all real healing is of God. Psychic or demonic healing only appears to be healing. Satan will heal the body in order to enslave the soul through false and cultic teaching. It has been observed that witch doctors in primitive religions can heal – they do so through demonic power. Remember even Pharaoh’s sorcerers could match Moses’ miracles. Many a person has been led away from Biblical Christianity by those who practice healing from a non-Scriptural basis.

XII. **What About Faith Healers?** By faith healers I mean those who come before us saying they have the miraculous gift of healing and by laying on of hands can heal the multitudes – the people that will come in the prayer lines. The Bible undoubtedly teaches miraculous healing. I find no Scripture that says it doesn’t belong in the church. What we often see - in general, the wholesale prayer line and the praying for the multitudes in the way it is done - is simply not found to be done this way in Scripture. Healing is something that must be approached very carefully. When I see the prayer lines, I have these concerns:

- (1) There will be people who are not born again.
- (2) There will be worldly people.
- (3) There will be people who are trying to manipulate God.

The above people have no real understanding of what’s going on and are simply trying to get in on something that they are not prepared even to appropriate. They’ve not been instructed, their hearts are unclean, and some may not even be saved. One may say, “Jesus did this.” In the case of Jesus, you have these instances where He did, but then you have the other side. You can be certain that Jesus did not put His approval upon a shallow faith or lack of dedication to Him in this matter of healing.

Now closely related to the faith healer would be being slain in the Spirit. We have to be cautious when we talk about these things. We dare not limit God, and we have lived in the natural so long in our churches that when we see the supernatural it offends some people. You see, I am not against the supernatural, or the emotional, or that which cannot be explained at all. In the Wesley meetings, people were slain or fell out under the power of the Spirit – not just for a few moments, but for hours and they threw blankets over them. This was true in the frontier revivals as well. We cannot say what the power of God may do. We have been so prideful and inhibited that many of us would be surprised that we’d do things that we don’t normally do right in the church in response to God’s power.

I raise the question, do you find an example of being slain in the spirit in the case of healing? The answer is no, you don’t find anybody who was suddenly touched, and collapsed and fell unconscious in the way we see it in the mass television healing services. There are two examples in the New Testament where there were people slain in

the Spirit, so to speak. In Acts 5:5 and 5:10, Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead by the Spirit, but that was not an act of healing at all. That was judgment.

People often quote John 18:6 as a Scripture for being slain in the Spirit. In this verse, the enemies of Jesus are falling to their faces, but we do not find this described in Scripture.

- XIII. **What About Prayer Cloths?** The Bible does speak of prayer cloths. In Acts 19:12, it says, “From his body” (that is the body of Paul) “were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them and the evil spirits went out from them.”

So the question is, should one use prayer cloths? Should we pray over cloths and send them out through the mail and tell people there will be healing through the prayer cloths? I think not. It was obvious that Paul, an apostle of the Lord was the embodiment of the miraculous. These prayer cloths encouraged the faith of the people, but they did not look to Paul or the prayer cloths for the healing. They looked to Jesus. This is not a form or ritual repeated in Scripture, but a temporary visual aid to encourage their faith.

- XIV. **Should We Anoint With Oil When We Ask for Prayer for Healing?** The answer is yes and no. Anointing with oil is certainly Scriptural. In Mark 6:13, it speaks of the apostles anointing with oil. “And cast out many demons and anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them.” In Acts 3:6, you find these same apostles not anointing with oil. Peter and John and the dramatic healing of the man at the gate Beautiful. There is no mention of the anointing with oil. In John chapter five, Jesus heals the man, no anointing mentioned and in John chapter 9, Jesus uses a mud pack to heal the blind man. When you begin to lay down general, dogmatic rules in the area of the miraculous you get in trouble. My personal opinion is that anointing with oil is a valuable thing and I would encourage it rather than discourage it because oil is very significant in Scripture. In James 5:15, it says the elders of the church are to anoint with oil. Some have said this is medicinal, but I do not believe this at all. God, if He’s a doctor, would not apply oil for all diseases. If you take the abundance of Scripture, you would have to conclude that this oil stands for something of tremendous significance.

In the Old Testament when a king or priest was anointed he was set aside for a special service to the Lord. In the New Testament it means more than that. It means that the resurrected life of Jesus indwells our mortal body and is the one who gives the healing. To see that oil with our eyes is to encourage our faith – not that the oil heals. Not only that, it gives satisfaction to a believing heart. I have done exactly in simplicity what God said to do. If we are too educated and sophisticated to do the little simple things God says do, we are unbelieving. So I think it does have a place and I think it is a great visual aid and the Scripture says when the elders pray for the sick, they are to use oil and anoint those who ask for healing.

- XV. **Does Healing Belong to The Ministry of the Church Today?** Is there a legitimate place in the local church for a healing ministry? I think we would have to say that most churches don’t do much with this and some deny it entirely. Let me say that the primary

ministry of the local church is not the healing of the physical body. You don't have to be healed physically to get to heaven. The healing of your soul cannot wait. You have got to be saved in this life or you will be eternally lost. So according to the Bible, we certainly must conclude as we read the total witness of Jesus and the apostles that the primary thrust of their ministry was to preach the gospel – to tell people they were sinners and lost and needed to be saved spiritually from their sins. But having said this, one cannot deny, on the basis of Scripture that miraculous healing is a ministry of the New Testament church today. According to Matthew 4:23, Jesus ministry was three-fold. Matthew sums up Jesus ministry by saying, He went about teaching, preaching and healing. Paul comes to his people and says “You are His body in the world.” The church is the body of Christ. What does that mean? It means that we are to do His ministry. He's given us a body – the church and through the new body and the baptism of the Holy Spirit is given the life of Christ and the ministry of Christ, including the miracles of His resurrection. It's in the body today. 1 Corinthians 12:9 mentions not just the gift of healing, but the gifts of healings. It's plural in the Greek which I take to mean that not only does the church have the gift of physical healing, but emotional healing, and mental healing. So many people today are sick mentally and emotionally and medicine can't touch this, only Jesus.

Do you want to be healed today?

According to the Bible, I will tell you what you should do:

- (1) You need to search your heart and soul for sin and unbelief, if you really want to be healed. If people were to do this, they would never even take their illness to the elders of the church before they would be gloriously healed. Medical doctors tell me that half the people in the hospitals today would be discharged if they really got their souls clean of unforgiveness and old grudges that they are hanging on to.
- (2) You need to ask God for wisdom. Before asking the Lord for healing, ask for wisdom. Ask Him what He is trying to do in your life. If you are a Christian and you are sick, God may be trying to show you something very important. He hasn't been able to get your attention just through the Word. Ask Him what He is trying to teach you.
- (3) You need to ask yourself, “What is my motive in being healed?” Is it for the glory of Jesus or is it for my own glory? If God has a work for you to do and you intend to do it and you will glorify His name, I guarantee He can make you well. If it is so that you can go your own selfish way, I don't think God is under any particular obligation to heal you. The Holy Spirit reminds us that we are dedicated to Jesus and to His glory, and that resurrected life indwells us that we might minister and be a blessing to Him and bring glory to His name, and not just to live a selfish, good-for-nothing life. This is the reason I don't think I can gather together 10,000 people and lay my hands on them with all my faith and say “Be healed.”

- (4) You need to bow to God's sovereignty. Someone once asked me, "Is it Scriptural to command God like you would command a servant in your home to heal?" I certainly don't feel that spirit at all. When I pray for healing I feel a deep sense of humility, unworthiness, and brokenness before God. We can speak to the demons and command them to come out – I am not talking about that. As we approach the Lord for healing, we must always understand that God knows something that we may not know at all. Are you willing for God to be God? Or are you going to hold on to the old clique and say, "God doesn't want anybody to be sick in the world, including myself, so God, you've got to heal me." We must bow before the Sovereign God and want His will done and be willing to submit to it.
- (5) You need to call for the elders of the church. You can be healed through your own prayers but there is a time to call the elders. There is power in the action of the body, through its represented leaders and God blesses that. In James 5:14-15, he says, "Is any sick among you? Let him call." You are to call. The elders are not to come to you – you are to call. "For the elders of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith" – that's the prayer of the elders – "and the prayer of faith shall save" – that's the word "heal." "Shall heal the sick and the Lord shall raise him up and if he has committed sins they shall be forgiven him." "Confess your faults one to another and pray one for another that ye may be healed. The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Who is to be righteous? The elders who pray and the man who seeks healing.

Conclusion: Suppose you have prayed for healing, believing that you could be healed and qualified according to your knowledge of the Bible and you have not been healed? Does that mean you lack faith? Does that mean there was sin in your life? Not necessarily. We'd better be careful here on the basis of Scripture. Paul had faith and Paul certainly had no unconfessed sin in his life, but he was not healed. I have seen people who had faith and who had cleansed their soul who were not healed. Sometimes a faith healer will come along and say "you were not healed – I prayed for you but you didn't have the faith and there's sin in your life." You need to realize that the burden may be on the faith healer himself because in James 5:15 it says the prayer of faith – whose faith? It's the faith of those who are doing the praying – the elders. It's the prayer of the elders here, not even the person who's being prayed for. In Mark chapter 2, there were four men who brought a man through the roof. Jesus says, "Your faith hath made this man whole." It was the faith of the four men and not the faith of the sick man. Now I'm not implying that we ought to pray for healing without faith, but I am saying that nowhere does the Bible say you've got to have so many gallons of faith to be saved, nor does it say you have to have so many gallons of faith to be healed. There is a great mystery here. If the Holy Spirit has put enough faith in your heart to believe that Jesus can heal, you ought to pray for it.

Jesus ministers to the total man. The Bible speaks of wholeness. Jesus asks the question, "Do you want to be made whole?" A whole man is a man who is whole in his spirit, soul, and body. You are not whole if your body is sick, and you are not whole if your mind is sick, no matter what your faith might be in Jesus Christ. Jesus wants to make us whole in spirit, soul and body. This ministry belongs to the local church. I am convinced that if the body of Christ had opened

its heart to this miracle ministry that there are many people who have turned to false cults and to phony faith healers and false doctrines who would have found wonderful deliverance right in their own churches at the hands of their own pastor and leaders. If the church was the body of Christ at the point of ministering the healing of Christ we would not have a society today that is sick unto death.