

5 Indispensable Keys to Receive Your Divine Healing

We all need to receive healing from God. (And if you believe you're the exception, you need an extra-special kind of healing!) I believe healing is perhaps the deepest meaning of redemption. Something has happened to us on the inside that has left us seriously broken. And even forgiveness, as wonderful as it is, provides only a partial answer. Those steps to healing have some common characteristics for each of us.

The need for healing comes in many varieties;

- The child abused or neglected during his most formative years
- The woman used for someone else's pleasure so long she believes that's all she's good for
- The addict whose soul, body, mind, future and finances are completely controlled by an outside substance or behavior
- The "good" church member exhausted from endlessly doing good things so she will look good
- The spouse left hopeless, angry and bitter from decades of marriage misery
- The man whose unhealthy lifestyle has left him with humanly incurable diseases
- The woman whose genes, choices and circumstances leave her depressed and anxious
- The parent, spouse, child, sibling or friend grieving the death of a loved one
- The person who sees no future beyond poverty, persecution, violence or slavery

Jesus applied Isaiah's passage to Himself when He said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to

preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18-19).

We can hope that happens in one mysterious moment. And sometimes it does.

More often it's a process, one in which you and I fully participate.

These steps are almost always important as you receive healing from God:

1. Bring It Into the Light

Light heals. Light disinfects. Shame loses much of its sting when exposed to the light. A serious infection can begin to heal once the pus is allowed to drain.

We naturally hide our brokenness and dysfunction, often because we fear—perhaps rightly—more wounding from others if we allow it to be seen. But without exposing our need before God, to ourselves and to another person, healing almost never happens.

That may mean feeling more pain before we feel better. Some ways to do this include journaling, sharing with others, speaking the truth to God in prayer, expressing the associated powerful feelings in some way, getting honest about how bad things really are.

And remember that God is patient. You have choices about when, how fast, how far and in what way you allow your brokenness into the light.

2. Connect With Others

Although God can and does heal any way He chooses, healing

almost always includes getting close to other people (James 5:16). That other human being (counselor, pastor, spouse, friend) will not be perfect, but that's part of the healing. Ministering Christ's healing to another human being is a wonderful privilege. And often the only way you and I can receive healing is when it's offered from the hand of "Jesus with skin on"—from a person we can see and hear.

This kind of healing is one of the primary good things God intends a healthy marriage to provide. And it's who each of us are to be to each other in the body of Christ.

Whenever you become aware of a need for healing in some dimension of your life, one of your early steps must be to search out someone or several someones who you can share with, connect with, and through whom you can receive God's healing.

3. Choose Forgiveness

We do not become wounded by accident. Sometimes other people seriously wound us—sometimes unknowingly by default or neglect, and sometimes through intention or pure evil. The decisions we make and actions we take in response to our messed-up world wound us even more. The circumstances around us conspire to add even more wounds. And the dysfunctional cycles continue.

At some point, we will each have to choose what to do about the matter of forgiveness. How long do you really want your father's abuse to keep wounding you? How long do you want your mother's death, your spouse's betrayal, the bullying you received, the disaster you lived through to keep on poisoning you? It's not OK! But that's why forgiveness is the only way to find freedom.

Forgiveness simply means making the choice to allow God to handle the consequences. You let it go. You let the people involved go, even if that person is you. (Remember that you can forgive even if a relationship with that person is no

longer possible or wise.) If God allows pain to affect the one who wounded you, His wounds will be much deeper than you could ever inflict. And as for what you've done to yourself, if God says you are forgiven, who are you to disagree with Him?

4. Leave Old Stuff Behind

You won't be healed from lung disease while continuing to smoke cigarettes. You won't find freedom from bitterness while nursing a grudge. Your fear won't go away while you continue to pour negative messages into your mind. Your finances won't be healed while you keep racking up more debt. Your marriage misery won't get better as long as you criticize and shame your spouse.

Yes, old habits die hard. Jesus opens the prison doors for us, but we're the ones who have to decide to walk out. There comes a time, after you've ruminated about your dysfunctional childhood, belly-ached about how many people your addiction has harmed, cried endlessly over the death of your loved one or wallowed in guilt over your relationship misbehaviors, that it's time to move on.

David wrote Psalms about his sins. Peter never denied denying Jesus. Paul never covered over how destructive his old life had been. But they left the past behind. "Old things have passed away" (2 Cor. 5:17). Don't keep holding onto what God has set you free from.

5. Learn to Live a New Way

Then there's the rest of that verse: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature ... Look, all things have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). Jesus sometimes said it like this: "Go, and leave your life of sin."

New is sometimes hard. New can feel uncomfortable, strange, awkward. It takes time for new thoughts to become your default way of thinking, for feelings of sadness or regret to turn

into honored memories, for love and joy and peace to replace negativity. Who you are as a new creation on the inside may have a lot of growing up to do.

When God brings you healing from the inside out, you begin to experience a little bit of heaven here on earth. That healing is real even if it is not always complete in the sense that it will be in eternity.

So whatever you need healing from, what are you waiting for? Get walking! Good news, healing, liberty, freedom and recovery of sight is what God has promised you—this year. Right now!

Your turn: In what area do you need some new measure of healing? How can you cooperate with God in taking the next step? Leave a comment below. {eoa}

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