

7 Things God Can Do for the Sick

An older Christian woman I know picked up a “bug” while on a trip. On the airplane flying home, she grew desperately **sick**.

Thinking that if she would confess away the **sickness**, she would be instantly well, she said repeatedly, “I feel fine.” That formula didn’t work.

Next, she remembered a speaker who had urged that we are to praise the Lord in all things, so she began saying, “Lord, I thank You that I am sick.” That didn’t cure her illness, so she tried yet another stratagem, based on the title of a book she had read: *Don’t Waste Your Sorrows*.

“Lord,” she said, “I know You are going to use this sickness for some good. I don’t want this experience to be wasted.” Still, nothing in her condition changed.

Finally, in sheer desperation, she cried out to the Lord in childlike honesty: “O God, help me; I’m sick.”

Too often we listen to the well-intentioned advice of others when we are ill rather than simply coming to the Lord with an honest admission of our need for His help. **Psalms** 41 shows us how to **pray** when we are sick.

Confidence

David opens his **prayer** with a **blessing** similar to the fifth **beatitude** in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:7): “Blessed is he who has regard for the weak [‘the merciful’]; the Lord delivers him in times of trouble [‘he shall receive mercy’]” (Ps. 41:1).

Life often gives back what we put in. It’s the principle of reaping what you sow. If I have compassion for the **suffering**

of others, is not God more delighted to help me in my own day of trouble?

Our Lord goes far beyond that tit-for-tat standard. His healings arise not from our goodness, but His. However, David's perspective on generosity and good will causes us to ask, "Do I have regard for the 'weak'?"

Here are seven things we can **trust** the Lord to do when we are **sick**: (1) deliver, (2) protect, (3) preserve, (4) bless, (5) not surrender us, (6) sustain and (7) restore us from our bed of illness. There may be a gap in time between numbers 6 and 7. Being sustained while sick is a far different matter than being restored; we need both actions for **complete healing**.

Introspection

When sick for a lengthy period, we have time to think about the well-being of our souls. And we may become acutely aware of wrongs we have done.

I called upon an elderly father facing life-threatening surgery. He gathered his grown children around his bed and, with weeping, begged them for **forgiveness** for the harshness and hurt he had inflicted upon them when they were young. His condition made him realize he might not have another chance on earth to make things right.

David cries, "O Lord, have mercy on me; heal me, for I have sinned against you" (v. 4). The answer: "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 5:15).

After dealing with wrongs, it's time also to think about relationships.

David reflects on his enemies who hope he will die soon (Ps. 41:5), are two-faced (v. 6) and have written him off (vv.

7-8). Worse is the treatment from a former companion: “Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me” (v. 9).

Close friendships double joy and halve **sorrow**; but when friends lift up their heels, joy is divided and sorrow, multiplied.

Abandoned by his friends, David turns to the Lord for mercy, to be raised up and for the opportunity to repay those who injured him (v. 10). We too must do the same—with one difference. David’s repayment was the way of retaliation: our repayment against those who hurt us is to return good for evil. (See Romans 12:17–21.)

Calm

How important to have a right spirit when we are sick or in any difficulty, to echo the words of David when we have finished praying for our own healing: “I know that you are pleased with me. ... In my integrity you uphold me and set me in your presence forever” (vv. 11-12).

The **sickbed** prayer ends in praise (v. 13). Calm fills my own heart when I rest in God’s eternity and power rather than my own frailty and helplessness. Even if my sickness separates me from my body, it can never separate me from Him, the Everlasting One.

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