

Creating an Atmosphere for the Healing Power of God

Have you recently received a bad report from a **medical test**? Has a loved one just suffered a **serious injury**? The stunning blow from such news can instantly turn your world upside down.

The good news is God still **heals** today—in a variety of ways.

Sometimes God heals through **anointing with oil**, accompanied by the **prayer of faith**. Sometimes He heals through the **laying on of hands**. Sometimes He heals through the declaration of **His Word**.

Sometimes God heals through medical treatment or through the body's natural recuperative powers. And yes, sometimes God heals through miracles—whether instantaneous or progressive.

If you or someone you love is hurting, now is not the time to give up. Now is the time to renew your faith and draw strength from God's Word. Remember, the doctors' prognosis is not always the final answer!

Calling Out to God

Beverly Hilliard had suffered from severe back pain for three years after a speeding SUV ran a red light and hit her car head-on. Her car was demolished, and her 2-year-old son was injured so badly that he had to undergo plastic surgery (although he did fully recover).

Beverly was on medication to help relieve pain, but nothing could take away her constant backache. Unable to work, she had difficulty walking up a flight of stairs, let alone bending down to pick up something from the floor.

Fourteen weeks of physical therapy didn't alleviate the pain. Neither did the injections and numerous treatments her doctors

administered to her spine.

One day a friend invited her to a prayer gathering to listen to a taped message by Colorado Springs, Colo., pastor Dutch Sheets. The sermon had been recorded at a women's conference a few weeks earlier.

"I'm going, and I believe God is going to heal me tonight," Beverly told her husband. That evening Beverly joined 30 women gathered in a home in her small Tennessee town to listen to the taped sermon on crying out to God. The text was Jeremiah 33:3: "Call to Me and I will answer you and show you great and mighty things, fenced in and hidden, which you do not know" (AMP).

As Pastor Sheets got into the heart of his message, he declared, "This is the year of great deliverance. God is going to show up. We are about to receive what we have been asking for for a long time.

"This is the season of breakthrough. Now is the time to speak to the mountain to be removed. Now is the time to war in a different way.

"Begin to use your voice like a weapon and speak forth," he continued. "This is the time to apply Jeremiah 33:3."

At these words, a lightning bolt of faith surged like an electric charge through everyone in the room. Immediately the women began praying for one another.

All of a sudden Beverly was touched by the power of God. Her pain was gone! She was instantly healed.

When she got home, her husband immediately noticed the difference in her condition and began rejoicing and praising God.

Beverly stopped taking her medication. Soon she returned to work, pain-free. What happened that night? The Word of God,

proclaimed by an anointed preacher, released faith in its listeners to believe for signs, wonders and miracles. The women responded by laying hands on one another and calling out to God—and He answered.

For her part, Beverly had gone to the meeting with a high faith level, expecting to receive her healing. The message she heard released that faith—and again, God answered.

Increasing Our Faith

Jesus devoted much of His ministry to healing, and He encouraged and empowered His early followers to do the same. But nowhere does Scripture teach that divine healing ended when the last apostle died, as some people believe.

After the resurrection, when Jesus gave the Great Commission, He said, “And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name ... they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover” (Mark 16:17-18, NKJV).

According to Jesus, the gift of healing wasn’t for the apostles only. It was—and is—for all believers. He declared, “I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father” (John 14:12).

God still heals today, and He uses those who believe in Him as agents of healing!

We can establish our faith in God’s healing power on the validity of His Word, even when we don’t understand His ways. Unexpected illness or injury or pain can be discouraging and confusing, even to the strongest believers. At those times, the best we can do is to cry out, “Lord, increase my faith!”

Of course, the primary source of our faith is the Word of God, as Smith Wigglesworth declared so powerfully: “The Word of God is spirit and life to those who receive it in simple

faith....Know your Book, live it, believe it and obey it.

“Hide God’s Word in your heart. It will save your soul, quicken your body and illumine your mind. ... Increase [in faith] comes by action, by using what we have and what we know.”

Whether our pain is physical or emotional, we can choose to rely on God’s Word to sustain us through the dark days. When we believe, obey and act on His Word, God brings us into a deeper level of intimacy with Him. He uses our time of testing to conform us more and more to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29).

Asking the ‘Why’ Question

Do you ever ask God, “Why?” in the midst of your trial? One woman we know did, and God answered her.

Hilda was just 40 when she had a boating accident that almost took her life. She survived, and then underwent 22 major surgeries to put her crushed face back together.

Five years later, a cancer surgeon discovered a malignant melanoma and removed most of the upper arm muscle and all the glands under her left arm. He then grafted skin from her leg onto the affected area.

“Possibly only three months to live,” the doctor told her.

“I returned home in excruciating pain because the skin graft didn’t heal,” Hilda remembers. “After God had seen me through all my surgeries following the boating accident, I had taught on faith and healing in many churches. But now I was facing the loneliest time of my life.”

One day Hilda simply prayed, “Father, until now I have not asked You why the boat propeller sliced my face. But now I am going to ask You why about this cancer.”

Immediately she sensed God's presence fill the room. She felt as if Jesus sat on her bed and said: "Until now you have learned what I can do for you. Now I want you to know Me."

As she lay there weeping, she thought of a verse: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job 13:15, KJV).

"I repeated those words, and the minute they came out of my mouth, the pain left," she says. "From then on I began to heal. I was on a new path of not only trusting God, but seeking Him with all my heart."

Hilda pored over Bible passages for hours, learning a new dimension of prayer as she spent more time with the Lord. Although the doctors did all they could, she knows it was Jesus who did the real healing in her body and heart. Now in her 70s, Hilda is still teaching God's Word.

Walking in the Spirit

Answers to prayers for healing don't always come instantly. We must be careful not to judge those who are still trusting God for healing—as well as those who suffer from illnesses we don't fully understand.

One businesswoman who struggled with clinical depression felt that people in her church looked at her as though she had leprosy. Later, when she was diagnosed with cancer, they showed more compassion. But God strengthened her to persevere until she saw victory over both conditions.

In some cases, making lifestyle changes and obeying the Holy Spirit's leading can make all the difference, as Lynda Brooks discovered in her quest for healing.

When Lynda started taking a step aerobics class at her church, she began to have intense pain in her feet. She quit the class, but her pain persisted. Medication gave no relief.

She repeatedly asked for prayer. Still, her suffering increased, and she was forced to greatly curtail her activities.

“One day my Sunday school teacher, who had prayed for me for months, called me with hopeful news,” Lynda says. “She had had a vision of me being healed. She’d seen Jesus and me hugging each other and crying tears of joy.

“I presumed this meant instant healing—although she didn’t say that. But another year went by before healing came. And it only happened after I chose to make some changes in my attitude and daily habits.”

Lynda admits she had become addicted to television. At night when she couldn’t sleep because of the pain, she would watch romance and fantasy shows as a distraction. Although she knew this was allowing “garbage” into her thought-life, she continued the practice.

Also, because of her intense pain, she would sometimes take more medication than prescribed. When she confessed this to her husband and her doctor, they determined that Lynda’s husband would dole out her medications from then on.

“I made some drastic decisions,” Lynda says. “I stopped watching television completely and studied God’s Word instead.

“I changed my eating habits by abstaining from sugar and choosing a more healthy diet, which meant I lost weight and lightened the load on my feet. Then I enrolled in an exercise program at a local gym. I also allowed the podiatrist to fit me with specially made plastic molds for my shoes [orthotics] to help balance my weight more evenly and lessen pressure on the ball of my foot.”

Within two weeks of getting the orthotics, Lynda was able to walk without pain. She attributes her healing to God’s intervention and her lifestyle changes, along with help from

her doctor.

“I learned the difference between faith and presumption. I had to obey what God was showing me and change my bad habits,” she reports.

“Today I can walk anywhere, and I am back into the full swing of living—minus medications and television. I thank God every day for the miracle of being able to walk without pain after eight years of suffering.”

Trusting God, Not Miracles

Every health crisis gives us an opportunity to come to a deeper understanding of how the same God who created our bodies also has the power to heal them. Of course, the means God uses to heal one person may not be the means He uses to heal another. Just ask Beverly, Hilda and Lynda.

God sovereignly deals with each of us in unique ways. He knows what will draw us closer to Him and make us more like Christ.

That’s why, when pain, tragedy, or illness strike, we must place our faith in God—not just in our expected miracle. Our part is to pray. God’s part is to heal, in His way and His time.

Read a companion devotional.

Quin Sherrer and Ruthanne Garlock *teach and minister to women around the world. They have co-authored several books including, Lord, I Need Your Healing Power (Charisma House).*