

Finding Effective Prayer for Your Healing

Sickness and disease: is it simply a fact of life on this miserable, sin-filled, messed-up planet? Is it our own fault? Can we expect healing as a result of faith in Jesus?

Even those who haven't previously sought God's intervention often seek out prayer for healing when they or a loved one become ill. And yet there's a lot of frustration among believers about this topic. Some seek someone to pray for them every time they face a physical symptom. Prayer can never be wrong; surely it's always right to seek prayer.

And yet there are many strong believers in Jesus who are still sick. Are they doing something wrong? Are they praying incorrectly? Are they seeking prayer from the wrong people? Do they have a lack of faith? If they could just get up enough faith, would they be healed?

Probably because I'm a medical doctor, people who aren't even my patients often talk to me about their medical problems. Right now:

- A friend's daughter is facing surgery for uterine cancer
- A shirt-tail relative is recovering from major emergency abdominal surgery
- A business connection and his wife are struggling to find effective infertility treatment
- An internet friend is wrestling with fear over her respiratory illness

I hear the questions, the heartache, the challenges to faith and hope. They perhaps aren't spoken out loud, but they're screaming inside:

- "I caused this problem. How could God do anything for me

now?"

- "I've prayed and prayed. Why isn't God healing me?"
- "It's pretty much useless to pray. This is something I've just got to deal with myself."
- "I'm just going to keep on praying. Surely God will fix things for me if I just hold on long enough."

In contemplating what the Bible says regarding how Jesus responded to sick people when He was here on Earth, I love what one of my professors said about Jesus:

"Jesus only had one attitude toward sickness and disease: He's against them!"

Sickness and disease is an imposter. An enemy. The Bible is clear about that. Sure, God can and often does use our weakness, our sickness, to teach us things. He can take what was meant to harm us and turn it into something useful. But sickness is still an enemy.

And when it comes to fighting an enemy, God has a lot to say.

"Quit Praying. Get Up and Do Something!"

God didn't often ask His people to quit praying. But there's one dramatic time He did so. Joshua was bemoaning the fact that Israel had been defeated, and God said, "Stand up! What are you doing down on your face?" (Joshua 7:10) There was business to be taken care of. There was work to do.

Sometimes God says the same thing to us. Sometimes our sickness may be the result of our own behavior, and we need to make some significant changes in our lifestyle. Sometimes we need to actively "fight", mentally and spiritually, the sickness we are faced with. Sometimes we need to make use of the help God has allowed to be available to us. We may have business to take care of in answering our own prayer.

Here's what that might look like for you and me today:

- **Survey your lifestyle.** Are there things you know you're doing or not doing that are or have contributed to your illness? You're responsible for "taking care of business" to the degree it's within your power to do so. That doesn't mean you're left alone, though: God wants you to seek Him for wisdom and strength to do what's necessary. But He won't do it for you.
- **Get professional help.** Seeking medical care is not expressing a lack of faith. See your doctor, your nutritionist, your therapist or any other professional as a tool to help you move closer to the well-being God wants you to have. Professionals can help you with knowledge, treatments, and plans that you can then take and use in your journey to healing.
- **Check your thinking.** How you think affects your physical and emotional health in many ways. You can choose what you think about. Filling your soul with positive input, especially faith-filled input, will increase your physical and mental strength and help you see opportunities to cooperate with God.
- **Clear your heart.** Bitterness, lack of forgiveness, holding on to some sinful behavior, refusing to take some action you know God has asked you to do—these are some of the things that can prevent you from experiencing God's best, including physical or emotional healing. It's not that you can magically get rid of these blockages yourself, but you can decide to allow God to have His way in your heart.

You cannot make yourself healed. If you are not healed, it doesn't mean you've necessarily done or are doing anything wrong. The point is to responsibly do what God has put within your power to do.

"God, Heal Me Please!"

And what about prayer for healing? God's Word says too much about healing to not believe. God is a Healer. The Healer.

He's the same yesterday, today and forever. It's His nature, and He doesn't change.

I've also seen too many people, including me, experience God's healing to not believe personally. Sometimes when you're sick, you need to hold on to someone else's faith for a time. And that's OK.

In praying for God's healing, here are some specific things to do:

- **Seek both His hands and His face.** Don't only look for the goodies; look for Him. Search out places and times to be in His presence. You get close enough to Jesus, and healing just happens. (Psalm 27:8)
- **Ask.** Specifically ask God for what you need and want. Don't you love to give your child the birthday present they really want? Make your request clearly and boldly. (Matthew 7:11)
- **Be willing to experience healing in the order God sees best.** Our whole being needs healing—relationships, bodies, memories, thinking, character, soul. Give God permission to deal with all of you. (1 Thessalonians 5:23)
- **Trust Him.** Like a child with a parent, demanding doesn't get you anywhere. Trust does. Relationship does. Trust Him for more than your healing; trust Him with your whole life. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

May I pray for you right now?

"Dear Lord, I pray for your healing power to touch the person reading this just now. I ask that You infuse their body with Your healing power, their mind with Your clarifying light and their soul with Your transforming grace. May they know the fullness of joy that comes in Your presence. Amen."

Question: Have you asked God for healing? What was that experience like? {eoa}

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