

Scripture Says Pain, Health and Sin Share This Unexpected Connection

Sin, pain and health. There is often a connection. The Bible makes this truth very clear.

Please understand, I'm not saying that health issues are *always* the result of sin. But unconfessed sin can sometimes directly lead to health issues—mental and physical.

This past week, I delivered a workshop for Faith Community Nurses in Georgia. My topic was “Complementary, Alternative and Integrative Medicine. What's the Christ Follower to Do?”

During my research, I learned that, according to the National Institute of Health (NIH) the No. 1 reason why people turn to alternative modalities and therapies, rather than traditional medicine, is because they are in physical pain. They are seeking relief from chronic pain—back pain, neck pain and joint pain.

More than half of American adults (125 million) had a musculoskeletal pain disorder in 2012.

Sometimes the pain is rooted in a skeletal or biological issue or imbalance. Often this comes about as a result of an accident or injury.

But sometimes the pain can be caused because people are in internal conflict with God or with themselves because they have sinned or are living in intentional sin. This internal conflict can cause tension in the muscles and other body tissues. Soft-tissue tension can sometimes compress the tissue or bone against nearby nerves and result in pain. Sometimes the pain becomes chronic.

Sure, a massage or an acupuncture treatment, an anti-inflammatory pill or physical therapy can provide short-term relief. But if the pain is rooted in the inner conflict or guilt that stems from sin, the treatment or pill may very well not cure the pain.

What the Bible Says About Pain, Health and Sin

The Bible addresses pain health and sin head on. Let's look at a few key verses in Psalm 38:

"O Lord, do not rebuke me in Your wrath, nor chasten me in Your hot displeasure. For Your arrows pierce me, and Your hand presses down on me. There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your indignation, nor is there health in my bones because of my sin. For my iniquities have passed over my head; as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me. My wounds grow foul and fester because of my foolishness. I am bent, I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. For my sides are filled with burning, and there is no soundness in my flesh. I am numb and completely crushed; I have roared because of the groaning of my heart. Lord, all my desire is before You, and my sighing is not hidden from You. My heart throbs, my strength fails me; as for the light of my eyes, it also is gone from me. My friends and my companions stand back because of my affliction, and those close to me stand at a distance. ... For I am ready to stumble, and my pain is continually before me" (vv. 1-11, 17).

Clearly David felt guilty from his sin. He was in mental anguish. He likely could have experienced arrhythmia in his heart. He experienced searing pain. In the New International Version, verse 7 reads, *"My back is filled with searing pain; there is no health in my body."*

Do you see the connection between his sin and the pain and poor health that David experienced?

Let's look at another Scripture where in Psalm 32, beginning

with verse 1, David writes the following:

“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord does not count iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy on me; my strength was changed into the drought of summer. Selah. I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not conceal. I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,’ and You forgave the iniquity of my sin” (vv. 1-5).

Internally, David felt guilty because he knew that he had committed sin. This internal conflict—his guilt and negative emotions—undoubtedly caused harmful chemicals and hormones to be released within his body, resulting in inflammation, sickness and pain. God permitted this. God designed us in such a way that our sinful behaviors (our will/choice to engage in sin) and our mind, emotions and body are all intricately connected. Nothing happens in isolation!

For more insight into biblical principles and examples related to sin and health read the following verses:

- Psalm 106
- Psalm 107:17-20
- 1 Corinthians 11:30

Sin, Pain and Health—The Prescription

The spiritual prescription or solution to pain and health conditions that are rooted in sin is confession to God and turning from the sin. The healing occurs through God’s forgiveness and in recognizing His forgiveness. Remember what David wrote in Psalm 32:

“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord does not count iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. ... I

acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not conceal. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,' and You forgave the iniquity of my sin" (Ps. 32:1-2, 5).

As we receive God's forgiveness from sin, we can release our guilt feelings. The tension can then fall away. The body stops releasing harmful substances. It returns to balance. We can again experience God's peace. This all promotes good health and a lack of physical pain.

So you see, there is a connection between sin, pain and health.

If you've been experiencing chronic pain or a health condition that your health care provider has not been able to cure, I encourage you to prayerfully ask God to help you examine your heart and your behaviors (Ps. 139:23-24). Ask Him if you are holding on to any resentment toward someone. Ask Him to show you if there is any recurring or unconfessed sin in your life. If He shows you anything, be obedient to confess and follow through with what He shows you to do.

Be encouraged! God loves you so much that He sometimes brings physical pain or sickness into your life so that you'll turn from sin and grow closer to Himself! {eoa}

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