

Why Hasn't God Healed Me?

The invitation had just been given for anyone who needed prayer to approach the altar. John came forward, kneeling in silent contemplation—silent except for the tears streaming down his cheeks.

I stood behind the prayer rail and knelt in front of him as he extended his hands to grasp mine. His body trembled as he sobbed. Behind him stood his wife, one hand resting on John's shoulder and the other raised heavenward as she prayed silently and wept openly.

"I just got back some tests on Friday," John whispered. "The doctors say I have prostate cancer. Pastor, I don't know if I have enough faith to go through this. Will you pray for me?"

As I anointed John with oil and prayed with him for healing, my mind pondered the phrase "enough faith."

For years I have heard preachers imply that faith in some way is quantified. The myths seem to circulate unabated: "If Susan had just had enough faith, she would have been healed," or "When Bill's faith gets strong enough, he will be healed," or "If everyone in this room all believed at the same moment, then all would be healed."

But is healing really based on your faith alone? What should be your perspective when God doesn't heal immediately?

If you are to understand why God doesn't always heal now, you will have to peel away the layers of myth that have been so tantalizing to embrace. You will have to dig deep into the Scripture for yourself instead of consuming the "fast food" of your favorite popular name-it-and-claim-it theologian. And you will have to decide to walk by faith instead of simply mouthing the platitudes of faith that have so easily supplanted God's Word in your daily confessions.

The truth is, while the lack of faith may hinder healing, healing does not depend on faith. I have witnessed both the faithful and the faithless being healed. And I have seen those of great faith die. In fact, everyone Jesus healed eventually died.

Those around the tomb of Lazarus lacked faith, and certainly Lazarus was in no position to exercise faith—he had been dead four days (see John 11:39-40). Yet Lazarus experienced a wonderful healing: He was resurrected.

A man once said to me after a friend's funeral: "Life's greatest enemy is death. She lacked faith. She doubted. So she lost and thus died." Yet this deceased friend was a believer who had surrendered her life to Jesus as Lord and Savior. She lives eternally with Christ in heaven. How silly to suggest that people die because of a lack of faith. Does this mean that people with enough faith will never die? Of course not!

If death were the enemy, why would Paul write, "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain," or "We walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord" (Phil. 1:21; 2 Cor. 5:7-8, NKJV). We must avoid the myths of faith and healing and embrace the truth revealed in Scripture.

The Myths of Faith Healing

Some believers focus exclusively on faith as the key to healing. Yet Jesus healed many who apparently had no faith. Some were healed because their friends had faith. Others were bound up by demonic spirits and healed by exorcism, even against their wills.

The truth is that God heals. The myth is that God always heals now at the initiative of our faith.

Faith teacher Frederick K.C. Price has asserted: "The seventh method of receiving healing—[which] I believe is the highest

kind of faith—is the highest way to receive you believe you receive it, you will confess that: ‘Bless God, I believe I am healed. I believe I have received my believe that it is so. I believe that I can walk in divine health all the days of my life.’ You are reading after one man who will never be sick, and I’m not being presumptuous.”

Myth is mixed here with truth. The highest kind of faith is, “I believe in Jesus,” not just, “I believe.”

It is true that faith must be our initiative. But even our initiative comes through the prompting of the Holy Spirit: “No one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:3). Our faith helps us receive healing, just as the lack of faith hinders healing. But healing does not depend on faith. Healing depends on the Healer.

Healing is the will of God. Canadian evangelist Peter Youngren wrote: “Jesus clearly shows us God’s will in Word of God declares that ‘great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all’ (Matt. 12:15). When Jesus healed all, He was obviously doing the will of His Father, because He only did that which the Father wanted Him to do.”

Youngren adds: “This is why you can come with boldness asking God for healing. God is on your side. He wants the best for you. He is good.”

So, if God wills all to be healed, then can your faith move His hand to heal you? In the words of the Hertz rental car commercial: “Not exactly!”

Your faith moves Him to save you (see Rom. 10:9-13; Eph. 2:8). And in your salvation is your healing: “That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: ‘He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses’” (Matt. 8:17; Is. 53:4-6).

But your faith does not effect your healing now. When you are healed rests entirely on what the sovereign purposes of the Healer are.

Consider this biblical example. In John 5 Jesus healed one paralytic at the pool of Bethesda though a multitude thronged that place daily to be healed. Why was one man healed at that moment while others were not?

John 5:19 gives the answer when Jesus confessed, “‘Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.’”

Bible scholar Jack Deere correctly observes that the initiative for the miraculous in Jesus’ ministry did not begin with Him but with the Father. “He healed only the people He saw His Father healing,” Deere writes. “The only firm reason for the healing of the paralytic that we can derive from the context of John 5 is that the Father willed it, and Jesus executed His Father’s are ultimately faced with the conclusion that sometimes the Lord works miracles for His own sovereign purposes without giving any explanation for His actions to His followers.”

The second myth about healing is that if you stand fast in faith, you will be physically healed in time and space. Ken and Gloria Copeland have declared that healing will come if we have faith in our hearts and God’s Word in our mouths. But, they add: “It may take time for it to manifest in your body. So stand fast in faith, giving thanks to God until it does. Focus on God’s Word, not on physical symptoms.”

In what do we “stand fast”? The “rock” on which we stand isn’t faith or healing but Christ alone—the Healer. In Hebrews 10:23 we are admonished to hold fast to the profession of our faith. But in what is our profession of faith? Certainly, it is not in faith or in healing.

Be careful that your faith is not in faith itself—or, worse yet, in a faith teacher! Just believing hard enough, long enough or strong enough will not strengthen you or prompt your healing. Doing mental gymnastics to “hold on to your miracle” will not cause your healing to manifest now.

So what is faith? It is more than believing in your heart that God heals. The truth is that God is the God who heals. Faith is trusting the God who heals. Faith is a radical, absolute surrender to the God who heals. Faith is not holding on for your healing but holding on to the God who can do the impossible.

The truth is that your healing may manifest in eternity, not in time. If your trust is in God who heals, then when He heals you is secondary to belonging to the Healer. Certainly you will thank Him if He heals you today. But if your healing comes beyond death in eternity, will you praise Him now for that?

Paul did just that: “‘O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?’ The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:55-58).

The third myth about healing is that if you just confess your healing, you will be healed right now. But you should confess the Healer, not your healing.

In his best-selling book, *The Bible Cure*, Dr. Reginald B. Cherry encourages us to “speak to the mountain” of our illness when we pray. That is important in prayer. But praying it and saying it won’t make physical healing manifest now.

Positive confession does not effect healing. If that were

true, anyone who believes in mind-over-matter mental exercises could heal people. Only Jesus heals.

Our confession should be in Him, not in being healed now. Jesus sternly warned: “‘Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven’” (Matt. 10:32-33).

It's time we throw out the lies that cloud the truth about faith and healing. It's time we embrace the scriptural truths that shatter shallow myths and bring us freedom to confidently trust God.

Freedom in the Truth

When God doesn't heal now, you can apply essential truths about faith and healing that are anchored in Scripture. I've identified four key actions we should take when we face a serious illness:

1. Have others join their faith to yours in bringing your infirmity to Jesus. “When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them” (Luke 4:40; Matt. 8:16; Mark 1:32-34; 2:3-12).

Don't try to face sickness alone. An essential key to healing in the New Testament is the power of corporate faith and praying in agreement with others (see Matt. 18:19-20). When you gather with others to pray, the presence of Christ dwells in your midst. Because He is the Great Physician, with His presence comes healing power.

Throughout the healing miracle accounts in the Gospels, we observe that friends brought the sick to Jesus. In Mark 2, a paralytic man was brought by his friends to Jesus. The Syro-Phoenician woman brought her daughter to Jesus (see Matt. 15:22; Mark 7:24-30). A father brought his demonized child to

Jesus (see Matt 17:14-18; Mark 9:17-27; Luke 9:38-42).

Join your faith with others to seek the Great Physician. When sickness has weakened, fatigued and discouraged you, seek out others who will pray in faith.

2. Seek to receive a touch from God. The woman with an issue of blood exercised her faith by going outside and searching for the Healer. She did all she knew to do to reach out through a crowd and touch Jesus (see Matt. 9:20; Mark 5:25-27; Luke 8:43-44).

When you are sick, you might be tempted to isolate yourself from settings in which you can touch and be touched by the presence of Christ. At times, you may not feel like going to worship services. You may feel too weak to sing and praise God. You may be too tired and discouraged to call the elders of your church to anoint you with oil and pray in faith for you.

Resist this temptation to stay at home in isolation. Healing flows through the body of Christ. His body is the church. Break out of your loneliness and seek the Healer.

3. Submit yourself to the authority and will of Christ, trusting Him as your Healer. The centurion's faith in Christ opened a door for his servant to be healed (see Matt. 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10). Likewise, the authority for your healing does not rest in you or your faith. Claiming your healing and speaking the right words do not guarantee your healing now or at any future time. Your faith opens a door for you to receive your healing from Christ.

I prayed with a woman who demanded that God heal her. When I questioned her attitude, she exclaimed, "I have the authority as a child of God to command God to fulfill His promise of healing for me." She believed a common myth that has been spread by some faith teachers, who believe that we can command

God to do our bidding.

Our authority isn't over Christ but in Christ. We reign with Him in heavenly places (see Eph. 2:4-7). The sons of Sceva presumed to have healing authority but quickly learned that authority rested in the person of Jesus, not simply in the repetitious use of His name (see Acts 19:13-16).

The truth is that all authority for every matter, including healing, rests in Jesus: "'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth'" (Matt. 28:18). From Christ we receive imparted authority to say what He says and to do what He does. Submit to His authority for your healing.

4. Believe on His Word, not someone else's advice or counsel. Whenever Jesus spoke the Word, people were healed (see Matt. 8:8, 16; Luke 7:7). The psalmist said, "He [the Lord] sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions" (Ps. 107:20). Listen to the Word of the Lord for your healing. No one else's word, faith or assurance will do. When God doesn't heal now, trust His voice and believe His Word.

Proverbs 4:20-22 reads: "My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart; for they are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh."

When God doesn't heal now, trust His Word—not your circumstances or human advice. God has not abandoned you. He's not taking a vacation. He is right there by your side as you put your trust in His tender care.

Dr. Larry Keefauver is a former editor of *Ministries Today* magazine and founder of *Your Ministries Counseling Services* and *PowerHouse Families*. He is the author of *Lord, I Wish My Teenager Would Talk With Me* (Creation House).