

With Christ in the School of Healing

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Chapter 1

Introduction

We must understand that, although sickness and disease is an experience common to humanity, they were never part of God's original plan for mankind. We see God's original intention given to us in the opening chapter of the Book of Genesis, with the command to Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply, take dominion and replenish the earth. Problems only began to occur after the fall, in the third chapter of Genesis, when two new terms were introduced: the devil and death.

Clearly, pursuant to the first transgression, alien letters were introduced into the DNA code of mankind that have proliferated to this present day. This re-writing of the DNA strip can now be understood at the deepest level through modern research in microbiology. The great breakthrough in microbiology took place at the end of the 20th Century, when Francis Collins and his co-worker were able to assemble the complete human genome. Among the six million individual letters that make up this massive and complex code, the ones that were of pressing interest were the rogue letters, no more than 5 or 6 in number, that cause hereditary sickness. The hope is that, if these genes are found and isolated, they can be re-spliced with other healthy genes to prevent and cure sickness.

A major part of the earthly ministry of Jesus was His focus on the physical and mental well-being of men and women. It was not just the spiritual man that Christ ministered to but also the physical body. Not only the crippled, blind, deaf, and dumb, but also the lepers, the paralysed and people with every disease known in the medical compendium were healed by Christ. Healing then, must be featured somewhere in the preaching of the gospel.

With our modern medical knowledge, it is argued that the doctors and surgeons have taken over the mandate of the church. While we do not decry the role of the professional

healers (medical doctors), we see that, when miracles of healing accompany the preaching of God's Word, a deep impact is made on the minds of believers and unbelievers alike. An immediate way is made open into the hearts of men. The congregations of the Lord will begin to grow and, like in the Book of Acts, the Word of God will mightily increase and prevail.

Psalm 103 declares, "Praise the Lord, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name...who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases" (Psalm 103:1-3). This is the two-fold blessing and boon of the gospel being preached.

Let's discover together what it means to walk with Christ in the school of healing.

Action Points

We need to discuss the first two chapters of the Book of Genesis and come to a scriptural understanding of God's original plan for mankind.

We also need to study and understand what took place during the fall of man, in the third chapter of Genesis.

Study Questions

- 1) How did the transgression of Adam affect the human race?
- 2) How far does the final act of Christ on the cross bring full redemption to mankind?
- 3) When Psalm 103 speaks triumphantly of the Lord, “who forgives **all** your sins and who heals **all** your diseases,” is this just boasting of the general goodness of God in poetic language, or does this mean exactly what it says: **all** your sins and **all** your sicknesses?
- 4) To what extent is our *own* faith required in the interpretation of this scripture?
- 5) Can this promise be tied to Isaiah 53 and 1 Peter, where we read “by his wounds we are healed” and “by his wounds you have been healed”? These are verses that are commonly used in the doctrine of “healing in the atonement.”

Chapter 2

The Keys to the Kingdom

In Matthew 16, Jesus said to Peter, “I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.”

There is a lot worth studying in these verses.

- Who or what was the “rock”?
- What were the “gates of Hades”?
- What were the “keys of the kingdom”?

All of these questions should be discussed and we should have clear comprehension about what is being said and, just as importantly, what is not being said.

Look at the statement “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.”

What is a key? Simply put, it is a small instrument that is able to unlock doors to great potential. There are keys to doors, keys to car ignitions, keys to vaults, and keys that unlock mysteries. Without the right key, we find ourselves locked out, but with the right key we have access to the inside of things. To see the keys given to Peter in operation, we simply need to see him and the other disciples at work in the Book of Acts or, as it is more fully termed, the Acts of the Apostles.

The Key of Faith

Peter said to the crowd, after the lame man was healed at the Gate Beautiful, “Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?” (Acts 3:12).

If it wasn’t the faith of Peter that healed the man, whose faith was it? Peter goes on to say that it was “By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is

Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see" (verse 16).

Discuss this thought in the light of this passage and also in the light of Galatians 2:20, where Paul speaks about living "by faith in the Son of God."

The Key of Power

Christ said in His parting words to the disciples, "Stay in the city [Jerusalem] until you have been clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). The power of the Holy Spirit is clearly a crucial key to the kingdom. And with that gift come an array of other keys called the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The Key of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are listed for us in 1 Corinthians, chapter 12. They include words of wisdom, words of knowledge, the gift of faith, gifts of healing, the working of miracles, the gift of prophecy, the discernment of spirits, the gift of tongues and interpretation of tongues. Yes, it is possible to build a house with hand powered tools, such as hand saws, hammers, screwdrivers, etc., but it makes the job a lot easier when we have power tools at our disposal. The gifts of the Spirit are the "power tools" of God and they are given to His workers to help build His church.

The Key of Agreement With Fellow Workers

Partnership is a key word in the Book of Acts. There were no solo operators. Peter's name is invariably linked with John, and Paul's with Barnabas and Silas. The disciples were sent out in teams of two by Jesus, their teacher. If we are to see the works of God performed in power, we must understand the power of agreement in prayer and faith.

The Key of Praise

There are other keys that can be discussed, but the final one we will list here is the power of praise. Constantly, in the Book of Acts, we see the believers in times of great praise and worship to God. Prison gates open and walls fall down when praise is given to mighty God.

Study Questions

- 1) Discuss Acts 16:25-28, where every door of the prison was unlocked when Paul and Silas began to praise God.
- 2) The five keys mentioned here are by no means the only keys that are on the key ring of the believer. What others come to mind?
- 3) Which of the keys to the kingdom have you used?
- 4) Which have you witnessed in operation and what were the results?
- 5) When God's Word says, "Now eagerly desire the greater gifts" (1 Corinthians 12:31), does He mean "desire and seek the most effective keys to the kingdom"?

Chapter 3

How to Move in Faith

The exercise of faith is key to receiving anything from God. Salvation, the gift of the Holy Spirit, the operation of the gifts of the Spirit, and receiving personal healing are all contingent upon the exercise of our faith. Jesus would often ask: “Do you believe?” (e.g., Matthew 9:28).

Time and again in the New Testament we see the exercise of faith: faith to believe the message and the messenger, or faith to receive a promised package from God in whatever form that may be. There is always a coinciding of what we call the “two assents” when the gospel is preached. They are the “Yes” of the preacher and the “Amen” of the hearer. “Yes” and “Amen” and then comes the answer from God.

When Paul saw the cripple at Lystra listening to the Word being preached, he perceived that he had “faith to be healed.” Then he told the man to stand to his feet. At that moment, he received his healing.

However, in this mystery of preaching the Word and believing the Word, faith must always begin with the preacher. He is the one that ministers the Spirit and works the miracles spoken of in Galatians chapter three, verse two. “Let me ask you this one question: Did you receive the Holy Spirit by obeying the law of Moses? Of course not! You received the Spirit because you believed the message you heard about Christ” (Galatians 3:2 NLT).

We also need boldness to move on the Word and exercise faith in the promises of God. Hebrews chapter four refers to some people who failed to “share the faith of those who obeyed” (verse 2) and were therefore left bereft and did not enter the Promised Land.

Faith increases when we see God answer prayer and confirm His Word. Faith has the capacity to grow. Thus the Bible speaks of going from “faith to faith”. That means that we begin at one level of faith but, as we see God standing by His Word, we move to another level of certainty in the power and in the person of Christ. There are degrees of faith. Jesus said to His disciples, “You of little faith” (Matthew 8:26) before He stilled the storm on Lake Galilee. They had practically no faith, but they were amazed after He did this miracle, and then their faith grew.

That was a reproof to His disciples but, to the Gentile centurion, after he said to Christ “just say the word, and my servant will be healed” (Matthew 8:8), Jesus told him that he had “great faith” (verse 10). Notice that the purest kind of faith is faith in the “Word only.” That is important for us to understand. On the English fifty pound bill is printed: “The Bank of England promises to pay the bearer on demand the sum of fifty pounds.” There it is! We can have confidence in the bank to back up its promises. So it is with the demand of faith on the resources of the Bank of Heaven. We can have absolute certainty that the Owner of the bank will make good on His Word.

Now we come to the question of how faith can grow. There are six main ways:

- **Faith grows by feeding on the Word**

The Bible speaks of the Word of God as milk, meat and “daily bread” (Proverbs 30:8). It is therefore critical that we steep our minds in the Word of God.

- **Faith grows by exercising it**

We must exercise our faith daily in some form or another, and we can rest assured, that there will be no shortage of situations in which we can employ our faith.

- **Faith grows by confessing the Word**

To develop our faith, we should be confessing the Word of God in the face of contrary circumstances and evidence.

- **Faith grows by walking it out**

Jesus' life is often referred to as "His walk." The Bible says we must "walk even as He walked." We are not asked to do backflips by faith or some other marvelous contortion. We are simply asked "to walk by faith and not by sight." As we do that daily, we shall grow daily in our faith.

- **Faith grows by agreement**

Our faith grows when we pray in agreement with those of like faith. That is why Jesus sent His disciples out to preach “two by two.” There is mighty power in shared faith. “One shall put to flight a thousand but two shall put to flight ten thousand” (Deuteronomy 32:30).

- **Faith grows when we see answered prayer**

Our faith always grows when we see answers to the prayer of faith mentioned in James 5:15. The more answers we get, the more our faith grows.

Faced with certain situations, we will find that we rapidly come to the end of our reserve of faith. When that happens, we must do what Smith Wigglesworth called “change strength.” This means to change gears and rely on what Galatians 2:20 calls living “by the faith in the Son of God.” This verse, and others like it, need to be studied and discussed for they are critical factors in the equation of health and healing.

We are told, in 1 Corinthians 12:31, to earnestly desire and seek the “best gifts.” Surely God is not telling us to ask of Him something that He is not intending to give us. Then let us be bold to believe that the gifts of healing are part of God’s special portion for believers in His church today. Let us seek them earnestly and employ them boldly to the glory of God.

It is also necessary to compare the scriptures as translated by some of the more modern versions of the Bible. For Example: The verse in Galatians 2:20 in the King James Version is given as “the faith *of* the Son of God.” In other versions, it is given as “the faith *in* the Son of God.” Which is correct and why?

In Ephesians 4, in some versions, there is a comma between the words “for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry.” This completely alters the meaning to “for the equipping of the saints, for the work of the ministry.”

Study Questions

- 1) Discuss the scriptures mentioned in this chapter with your group. Try to use various versions of the Bible. Does the meaning change from one version to another?
- 2) Find 3 examples in the Gospels where Jesus speaks about faith.

Chapter 4

The Practice

Mark Chapter 16 lists one of the instructions in the Great Commission: “Those who believe...will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well” (verses 17-18). Also, in James 5:14-15, we find the well-known injunction, “Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well.”

There are two contexts for healing prayer given here:

- 1) The world;
- 2) The church.

Healing is to take place in both.

Let us first look at the church. The ecclesia is the Greek term for the “church assembled.” This is an arena where mighty things can and do take place. When the church comes together, there should always be an opportunity for those who are sick or in pain to receive prayer. James 5:14-15 tells us how it is to be done. The instructions are simple. Let there be an anointing with oil, an agreement in faith by the church and the laying on of hands by the elders. Then we have a promised result. The prayer offered in faith shall bring about healing. Church members need to be instructed in the simplicity of this process, and space and time need to be set aside for prayer whenever it is requested.

There should also be time allotted for people who have received healing to give testimonies.

The second context is the wider world. This may involve going to a home or other establishment where a request for healing prayer has been made. Whenever possible, go with a partner-in-faith. Take the anointing oil. Go armed with the Word of God,

faith and the spirit of agreement. If there are “nay-sayers” or doubters, ask them to leave the room.

Anoint the sick person with oil and then, after giving instructions on how to maintain their healing, leave without getting into trivial chit-chat. The simplest words that you can leave with a person is to tell them to keep inhaling deep breaths of Jesus and then exhaling great praise to God. If the people living in the home do not belong to a church, instruct them to join a local church body and be there next Sunday.

Also, in the wider world, there are innumerable opportunities to pray for people in various meeting places, in what we call the co-ordinates of life. Be ready at all times to bring Christ on the scene. Remember that you are never alone and that one individual plus God is always a majority. Be bold! “The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (1 John 4:4). Pray for people and, after you have done so, leave a card so that they know where they can contact you.

Study Questions

- 1) Where else in the Gospels do we find mention of the Great Commission?
- 2) What is your understanding of the term “elders” in James 5:14-15?
- 3) Do you believe that members of the early Church healed each other through prayer?
- 4) What is the significance of the oil used in healing?
- 5) Talk about the power of testimonies. Give a testimony, if you feel led to do so.
- 6) Why did Jesus ask the crowd of mourners to stay out of the room when He went in to pray for the dead little girl? (Mark 5:40)

Chapter 5

Where Is The Devil In All Of This?

Part 1

We know that Satan is alive and well on planet Earth and that his mission is to “steal, kill and to destroy” (John 10:10). That is a broad, far-reaching and hideous mandate. Peter, speaking in Acts chapter 10, said that Christ Jesus “went about doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil” (v. 38). However, can we then go on to say that every sickness and every infirmity is the direct work of the devil?

The first requirement of the believer in the Great Commission is to go into the whole world and preach the Gospel. His first opposition in carrying out that objective is the devil himself. Therefore, we see that the evil forces resisting the preaching of the Word have to be dealt with. Hence we read, in Matthew 10:8, that we should “cast out devils” (KJV) or “drive out demons” (NIV).

While devils are devils, there are spirits with different levels of power and with different tasks assigned to them. The Bible speaks of lying spirits, seducing spirits and divining spirits. There are also archetypal spirits that have sway over whole communities or areas. However, to confine ourselves to the point of this chapter, we will look at the one spirit that is the cause of most sickness and that is “the spirit of infirmity.” This spirit was defined for us in Luke, chapter 13, in the form of a woman who was bent over double and could not raise herself. In the modern medical lexicon, she would have been diagnosed as suffering from arthritis, scoliosis, or some other spinal condition. However, Jesus said that her condition was the result of a binding and deforming spirit. All spirits associated with Satan are evil, but this one had a certain job to do; namely to cripple this poor woman. When Jesus laid His hands on the woman, He loosed her from the ropes of this devil, and then went on to illustrate what He had done by likening it to a beast being loosed from its chain.

Christ moved in complete confidence and with clear insight every time He healed someone. Bearing this in mind, we must also see that some sicknesses are not the direct result of binding spirits or other spirits of infirmity. When the disciples, in John chapter 9, wanted to attribute the cause of one man's blindness on his own or his parents' sin, Jesus said: "It was not because of his sins or his parents' sins... This happened so the power of God could be seen in him" (verse 3).

Notice that there was an understanding in His disciples that a man's conduct could result in certain sicknesses. These are what we might term as "life-style ailments." And this is true to this day.

There are sicknesses that are self-inflicted by over-eating, laziness and addictions. There are also hereditary genes where the sins of the fathers (or mothers) are transferred down to children, and to the third and fourth generation. God said, "I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But I do not excuse the guilty. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children and grandchildren; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations" (Exodus 34:7).

These are not popular things to say but, in this study, we are involved in "Christ's school of healing" and not that of worldly philosophers or medical professionals. There is an old saying: "Soft doctors produce stinking wounds." So remember, when we begin to move in the Spirit, we are servants of God and not doctor "feel-goods." Discernment, then, is essential when we are operating in the gifts of faith and healing.

To one man, after he had been healed, Jesus said, "Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you" (John 4:14). This caused the man to react and go tell the Pharisees who it was that had healed him, which ultimately caused much trouble for the Lord.

So, when it comes to sickness, Satan receives a lot of the blame. But not all conditions can be directly attributed to his works or to being oppressed by evil spirits. We will be

discussing some other root causes of sickness and disease in our next chapter.

Study Questions

- 1) We've looked at the first part of John 10:10. Now look at the second part of this verse and discuss it with your group.
- 2) Discuss the instructions that Jesus gave to His disciples (the Great Commission) as it is described in Matthew 10:7-8.
- 3) What is the "spirit of infirmity"?
- 4) Can sin cause sickness? Explain. Do you know of any examples that might apply here?
- 5) How should we pray for hereditary diseases, such as cancer and diabetes?

Chapter 6

Where Is The Devil In All Of This?

Part 2

Satan is continually searching for “illegal” entry. For this reason, Christ describes him as a thief and a murderer from the beginning. He is named by Paul as the “prince of the power of the air” (KJV) and “the ruler of the kingdom of the air” (NIV).

Think about that. Satan is a flyer who is roaming through his domain, seeking for a place to land. Men give him opportunity to do so, often unwittingly. Where there are twisted, wrong and ungodly attitudes (bitterness, unjustified anger, jealousy, covetousness, envy, unforgiveness), there is a landing strip for the devil in the human heart. He is always an opportunist. As soon as his plane has landed on the strip given to him, his evil cargo is being unloaded.

Access Points

The first access point that allows the devil into our life is “wrong attitudes.” Once the devil has a foothold, the ground is enlarged and a principality is formed. A principality is a small, mini-kingdom within a larger kingdom. As the name suggests, we have a “prince” rather than a king. But it is still a rebel state within the human heart and, as such, is extremely dangerous. What seemed innocuous in the beginning becomes a rooted characteristic and is enemy territory within. From this place, all manner of havoc and destruction ensue, including sickness.

Discernment is necessary as we minister to any individual and we must tell that person to renounce the devil and all his works. This is important. How can we harbor hatred and grudges against another while seeking forgiveness and healing for ourselves?

This is a fulfillment of the parable of the great king in Matthew chapter 18. It is a dangerous place to be. As ministers, when we

come to an individual with wrong attitudes, we must encourage them to repent and renounce these attitudes.

Other access points for the devil are our “bodily appetites” and “addictions.” From the very beginning of creation, there has been a connection between sinning and food. All food, the Bible says, is permissible for eating and to be received with thanksgiving. But overeating, or gluttony of any sort, has deadly effects on the human body.

1 Corinthians 3 asks a question that requires an individual answer: “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple?... If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person” (verses 16-17). These are sobering words! Addictions of any sort are the result of the enemy driving the human will beyond the limits of legitimate appetites. Destruction of “the temple” (the body) is always the result.

The diseases that result from overeating or drinking alcohol in excess are what we call “lifestyle ailments.” Hyper-tension from being overweight, exhausted organs such as kidneys and pancreas that are the result of sugar-laden blood, arthritic joints from obesity, and cancers of every kind stem from wrong diets or slothfulness. One way or another we will pay the piper.

A man or woman who ministers in the area of healing must be bold enough to call a person to repentance and a change of heart regarding his lifestyle before he or she can pray the prayer of faith for God’s gift of healing. It’s called “tough love” and “straight talk” but we must be honest, yet caring, representatives of the Great Physician.

Finally there are conditions that are passed down through the family tree. We call these genetic diseases and they are access points through our ancestors. What a person’s grandfather did fifty years ago can still be producing consequences in his grandchildren. The Bible speaks of these as the “iniquities of the fathers.” This is the mystery of the family line and the consequences of generational curses.

There is a cryptic verse in chapter 20 of John's gospel where Jesus breathes on His disciples and they receive the seal of the Holy Spirit. He then goes on to say, "If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." We believe that this verse is a deep insight into the question of dynastic curses and the power of Spirit-filled men and women to break these curses. Since we are with Christ in the school of healing, we need to discuss these things together in an open forum and see what revelation the Lord gives to us.

Study Questions

- 1) What are some names given to Satan in the Bible?
What do these names tell us about his nature?
- 2) What are some access points that the devil uses to enter into our mind or body?
- 3) You may have heard that only God can forgive sins. Is this true? Why or why not?

Chapter 7

The Foundations of Good Health

If there is one thing better than divine healing, it must be divine health. Health is promised to all believers as a boon (a blessing or benefit) from God, but it is not given unconditionally. In Deuteronomy there is the promise of robust health as a consequence of obedience to the precepts of God's Word. It is incumbent upon us, therefore, to find out what the principles of good health are and to follow them.

We all know that overeating leads to becoming overweight and that excess weight is responsible for premature death and ailments of various types. We shall list a few here. Obesity leads to:

- 1) High blood pressure
- 2) High cholesterol
- 3) Kidney malfunction
- 4) Type 2 Diabetes
- 5) Sleep disorders
- 6) Joint problems which require replacements
- 7) Increased risk of cancers (because there are more cells for the cancer to attack)

Thus, when we talk about the foundations of good health, we must always begin with our diet. When Jesus fed the multitudes, He did not provide unlimited pizza with coca cola, and ice-cream for dessert. It was a simple feast of proteins and carbohydrates, and the people probably drank water from a nearby stream or lake. It did the job.

As far as we know, nobody complained. Let's keep simplicity in mind when we think about diet and let's also think about eating meals at home instead of getting fast food and takeout too often.

Small wonder that the fast food restaurants of America are called the “weapons of mass expansion.” Food laden with salt, excess sugar, M.S.G., trans fats and spices may excite the taste buds, but they wreak havoc on the human body and, before too long, we find ourselves in the healing line at church or at a conference.

The answer to all of this is an unpopular word in our culture: it is “self-discipline.” Bring this to bear in our daily walk and we find ourselves enjoying all the benefits of good health that God has promised us.

We must also incorporate regular exercise into our weekly agenda. The human body has been created for work. In our push-button world of labour-saving gadgets, more and more labour is being done by man-made machines, so that less and less has to be done by the people who invented them. We often hear the term “sedentary life-style.” That simply means “hours spent *sitting*.” Sitting at work, sitting at home, sitting in church, sitting at ball games, sitting in the car. Just sitting! Someone once said that “sitting has become the new form of smoking.”

The cardiovascular system of the human body must be stimulated and brought into resonance by daily use. We need to do exercises that force the heart to pump blood vigorously around the body, and that make the lungs expand with the demand for more oxygen. If that does not happen, the blood gets sludgy and plaque builds up in the arteries. The next thing you can count on is heart problems, and then you are back in the healing line. There is no pill that has ever been devised that can be a substitute for vigorous exercise. Build exercise into your daily regimen and you won’t need pills to keep you going.

Finally, it is important that the digestive system be drained regularly. There is actually a prayer in the Jewish prayer book that thanks the Lord for a good and regular bowel movement. Maybe we should dig that out and pin it on the bathroom door. Flax seed oil and Omega oils are natural laxatives when used along with a diet that incorporates fruit and fiber. There are

hundreds of books on the market that tell us what to do in this regard, so we don't need to add to them.

Study Questions

- 1) What is the promise in Deuteronomy that is referred to in the first paragraph of this chapter?
- 2) Discuss the problems that arise from overeating and the consumption of excessive amounts of alcohol. Include physical and emotional problems.
- 3) Does the Bible have anything to say about self-discipline?
- 4) How can you incorporate exercise into your week? Discuss with your group ways you can begin to enjoy exercising together.
- 5) Do you have or know of any good books on nutrition? Share your knowledge with your group.

Chapter 8

Persecution

Since healing by the laying on of hands is at the forefront of the Great Commission (Mark 16), we cannot engage in this divine work without experiencing great opposition. Mark that down: The Great commission means great opposition. Fulfill the first requirement of Mark 16:17—“Cast out demons”—and there will be an outcry from Satan and his people. Follow through with the manifestation of “speaking in other tongues” and there will be further criticism. Continue into the next part of the commission, where we lay hands on the sick and see them recover, and there will be more complaints and opposition.

So get used to it! If you are being used by God in the area of the supernatural, then expect persecution. It is all part of paying the price of “power ministry.”

How is this opposition to divine healing expressed?

- 1) Expect to hear that there are doctors and surgeons who, in these days of advanced medicine, will do the work of healing.
- 2) Some say that the spiritual gifts were only operating in the early disciples.
- 3) You will hear from people that “it’s all in the mind,” and that people who are healed are only fooling themselves.
- 4) Then expect to hear that divine healing by laying on of hands is all showmanship.
- 5) Finally, get ready for the age old question: “What about those who aren’t healed?”

Let's respond to some of these challenges and arguments:

- 1) God does use the human instruments and the wisdom of doctors; however, when the medical professionals have done all they can do, what then? God is, and will always be the Great Physician.
- 2) Who says that spiritual gifts are not for today? Is preaching for today? Is salvation for today? Then obviously miracles, signs and wonders are also still at the centre of God's supernatural arsenal. The big question that needs to be asked of a sceptic is, "Have you ever witnessed a miracle?" The answer will be, "No," and therefore it follows that they are not qualified to speak on something that they have never seen or heard about.
- 3) I have heard the argument that divine healing is "all in the mind" many times, and it is as old as the Pharisees who said, "Jesus casts out devils by Beelzebub." Read His reply to that in Luke chapter 11:17-22.
- 4) The thought of showmanship is also as old as the Bible. We must remain humble and give all honour and glory for healing to Jesus.
- 5) Jesus said that there are those who publicly "make long prayers" in the market place, but the antics of the Pharisees did not stop their own prayers from being answered. It is true to say that there are some people who are not healed—actually many of them—but there are also many that are healed. Just because there are some that may not be does not invalidate the command of God to minister healing to all who request the laying on of hands. The doctors do not have a hundred percent success rate in what they do either, but that does not stop them from practicing their profession.

Much opposition comes from within the church. This is to be expected because men and women who boldly follow through on the Great Commission are doing something that the opposition is **not** doing. Basically we sum up our position by

saying, “We like what we are doing better than what you are not doing.”

Finally, remember the words of Jesus when the disciples were concerned about the criticism of the Pharisees. He said: “Every plant not planted by my heavenly Father will be uprooted” (Matthew 15:13). So let the work proceed!

Study Questions

- 1) Look up other places in the Bible where the Great Commission is given. What are we commissioned to do by Jesus?
- 2) Have you heard other objections to the gifts of the Holy Spirit being active today?
- 3) Have you experienced a miracle of divine healing? Share your experience with the group.
- 4) What would you say to someone who tells you openly that they do not believe in divine healing?

Chapter 9

Paying the Price

Everything has a price tag. From things at the dollar store to cars at the BMW show room—from items that only cost a dollar or two to products worth tens of thousands of dollars that come with warranties and guarantees. We are all at liberty to enter the BMW show room and look around, but whether we drive out with a new car is another matter. Why? Because there is a high price tag on the products that we are looking for.

It is the same with God's treasury. We are all free to enter into the Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, but the greater gifts have the greater price tags attached to them. Think about the spiritual gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12. There are nine of them in three groups. The revelatory gifts, the power gifts and the vocal gifts. They are listed in God's treasury but, having considered them, the chapter ends by saying: "But earnestly desire the *best* gifts." (NKJV) Similarly, the New Living Translation of the Bible says: "So you should earnestly desire the *most helpful* gifts."

There is a key given to us in those words. The *best* gifts are those that have to be sought "*most earnestly*." This exhortation is in a similar vein to the verse of Hebrews 11:6 which says, "For without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he *is* and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

The word "diligently" has the same connotation as the word "earnestly." Both are defined as "with full, sincere, whole-hearted effort or concentration." And, as we have read in Hebrews 11:6, this must be done in full faith. There we have another price tag given to us: "full faith." We must seek God's gifts with full faith and with our whole heart.

Now to understand what belongs to us in our inheritance as children of God, we must read and study the Testament of God. That is why we have a book called the New Testament. Christ

had to die to bring the testament into effect. He did that when He took our place on the cross. His death made the will of God active and we are now His beneficiaries.

However, to comprehend what belongs to us, we must read the will (or testament) with the help of the executor of the estate, who is the Holy Spirit. This means getting alone with Him so that He can speak personally to us about the things that are freely given to us by God, our loving Father. Read 1 Corinthians, Chapter 2. It says it all!

There is another price tag. To get alone with God means to do just that. Jesus said that you must have a relationship with the Father “who sees what is done in secret” (Matthew 6:6). To do that, we have to go into our room, close the door and seek His face. We cannot seek God with the TV on or with any other distractions. That is impossible! Is it wrong to have a T.V? No; but to turn it off and seek God in prayer is part of paying the price. Is it wrong to play golf in the summer? Absolutely not, but if a man wants power from God, he must make a choice between playing and praying.

It is similar with reading newspapers or magazines. Thirty minutes of reading a newspaper each day is equal to three hours a week. But a price is paid when a person cancels their paper to spend three hours alone with their Bible. John 15:1-2 declares that a life of power is a pruned branch. A purged life is one that has been offered to God to cut back unfruitful sucker branches that drain the Spirit out of our life.

Finally, all of us need to seek out the right people who will be in agreement with us—people who shun the sports teams and the chess club in order to join in prayer with others in the “fellowship of the Spirit.” For this reason Jesus sent His people out two by two. Think about these things as you are browsing in the treasuries of God.

Study Questions

- 1) What high price did Jesus pay for us?
- 2) Review the revelatory gifts, the power gifts and the vocal gifts.
- 3) What do you consider to be the *best* or *most helpful* gifts? Why?
- 4) What have you given up in order to spend more time seeking God's face and reading the Bible? What price did you pay?
- 5) Discuss our inheritance from our Father God.
- 6) Are you ready to "pay the price" to flow in the power gifts of the Holy Spirit?

Chapter 10

Breaking the Power of Curses

Curses! How powerful are they and how can they be broken? Look at Genesis chapter three. The results of the initial act of disobedience to God have issued forth since the fall of man like a grim tsunami across the years, touching the entire human race, and spanning the whole earth. There is no place and no nation that has not felt the effect of the general curse (Genesis 3:17).

This verse answers the question, “Does God issue maledictions?” and it is clear that He does. If the first word pronounced over mankind was “blessing” in chapter one of Genesis (verse 28), then it is clear that God, who has the power to bless, also has the prerogative to issue curses.

Consider the effects of this curse as we see it unfolding in the earth today. The Bible speaks of “thorns and thistles” being brought forth under the command of God against which mankind has fought a continual battle for 6,000 years (Genesis 3:18). There are also alien germs, bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites, called pathogens, that are part of this universal curse and that have brought ailments, disease and death into the bloodstream of humanity. Open a medical compendium and you will see all of these diseases in grisly reality. The curse of God and its effects are real!

To understand the healing that is available to us in the atonement through Jesus’ death, we must first of all grasp the significance of what took place during the fall.

There are also other, more specific curses that are referred to in the Bible. Consider Deuteronomy chapter 28. Representatives of the twelve tribes of Israel were told to ascend two mountains while the rest of the people stayed below in the valley. From Mount Gerizim were shouted out the blessings that would be given if the nation walked in obedience to God. They can be

summed up in three words: health, happiness and prosperity. From the other mountain (Mount Ebal) were given the consequences of disobedience in the form of curses, all of which can be summed up in four words: sickness, misery, bondage and poverty. At the end of these pronouncements, God summed up His will for the people by saying: “This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19). And who in their right mind wouldn’t choose life over curses and death?

When Jesus returned to His home town of Nazareth, as recorded in Luke 4:18-19, He spoke the following words: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Does that list of good deeds match up with the dire curses spoken of in Deuteronomy 28?

Jesus came to break the power of the curses. In His ministry on earth, He did just that as He went about healing **all** those who were oppressed of the Devil. But the whole deal of redemption was sealed on Calvary when Jesus hung on the cross (Galatians 4:5) and took our curse upon Himself, which was symbolized in the crown of thorns on His head. We need to discuss the implications of this so that we might understand the truths that set us free from sickness, disease and pain.

Study Questions

- 1) Read the curses of God to Eve and Adam in Genesis 3:16-19. Do you see that the ultimate curse was death? (verse 19)
- 2) What other curses did God warn the Israelites about in Deuteronomy 8 and 28 if they were disobedient to Him?
- 3) Why do you think Jesus chose to speak about the prophecy of Isaiah 61 in the synagogue in Nazareth? (see Luke 4:18-19)
- 4) How did Jesus redeem us from sickness, disease and pain?

Chapter 11

Holy Spirit as Our Immune System

The greatest safeguard to consistently good health is to be filled with the Holy Spirit. After all, that is what the human body was created to be—a temple of the Lord. Being filled with the Holy Ghost is the frontline defense of our new immune system for spiritual and physical health.

The apostle Paul asks a question in 1 Corinthians chapter three: “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person; for God’s temple is sacred, and you together are that temple” (verses 16-17). What the “destruction” of the temple means is open to discussion in the study questions, but the first verse is beyond speculation. Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Let us believe that the reverse effect of desecration is also true; namely that if the temple of our body is consecrated to the Lord and sanctified by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, then God will preserve and protect us from sickness.

All of this makes perfect sense and is consistent with the Scripture. If our body has been handed over to the Lord as is commanded in Romans 12:1-2, then He ensures that we will be in sound and robust health in order that we might be about His business. He also keeps the thief of all good things at bay (John 10:10), for who is going to break into God’s house when He is in residence in every room of that house?

In Luke 11, we see the consequence of what happens when a man, who has been delivered from the illegal invasion of an evil spirit, does not get filled with the new Resident, the Holy Ghost (verses 24-26). That man is vulnerable to worse things than he experienced in his former state. These things are all too real and can be corroborated time and again, when worse conditions come upon people who are not consecrated to the service of Almighty God once they have been delivered.

When Jesus healed the man at the Pool of Bethesda, He later addressed him in the temple and gave him words about his own “temple”, which was now fully healed and mobile. This is what Jesus told him: “Now you are well; so stop sinning, or something even worse may happen to you” (John 5:14). A dire warning indeed! It makes one wonder what could be worse than being a cripple for 38 years.

The indwelling of the majestic and mighty power of the Holy Spirit in our mortal body is the greatest of all immunities against sickness. People who jump for joy, shout out praise to God, and are vocal in their testimony of God’s power to save and heal may seem wacky to other people in the world but, let’s face it, they have something to shout about and good health is one of them!

Study Questions

- 1) What is the most perfect immune system for our bodies?
- 2) Looking at 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, what do you think is meant by “God will destroy that person?”
- 3) Why are sickness and disease essentially “illegal” in the Christian experience?
- 4) What needs to happen after deliverance (after a demon is cast out)?
- 5) Do you believe that God wants us to be well? Why?
- 6) How can we be filled with the Holy Spirit?

Chapter 12

Caring for our Natural and Spiritual Immune System

In Romans 8:11 we read, “And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.” This is a wonderful Scripture because it mentions the physical body and the Holy Spirit within our body.

The following verse is also a noteworthy one: “The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life” (John 6:63). If we isolate this one verse or take it out of context, we could form a conclusion that it’s more important to take care of our spiritual needs than our physical needs. However, in this chapter, we will see clearly that we have a responsibility to take care of both. In fact, if the Spirit of God is all we need to remain alive on this earth, we would not have need for another powerful, natural system working within us called “the immune system.”

In order for our immune system to operate effectively in our body, we must maintain a **healthy diet** combined with **exercise** and **proper rest**. Notice the emphasis is on “proper” rest. It seems that, at times, we can sleep all night yet get very little rest and, at other times, we sleep for just a few minutes and feel well-rested. Jesus understood the importance of rest and sleep. Read Psalm 127 verse 2 to see what God says about sleep. In John 4:6 you will see that even Jesus was tired and needed to rest. Another time, in Matthew 8:24, we see that Jesus needed more than just a quick rest; He needed the benefits that only a deep sleep can bring. So deep was His sleep that it wasn’t the raging storm that woke Him up; it was His disciples. If you read just a few chapters before Matthew 8, you will see what Jesus was engaged in that made Him so tired.

Again, it is vital we understand that, although we have the Holy Spirit living within us as Christians, our bodies are still very much natural. If we don't acknowledge fully that our natural bodies need proper care, then we may end up needing God to do something supernatural to heal them later.

Take a look in Luke chapter 8, verses 49 to 56. The daughter of Jairus had died, but when she was raised up by Jesus, He ordered that she be given something to eat. He knew that, though she was raised back to life supernaturally, she would need the strength from natural food to sustain her. This need is seen again when the multitudes followed Jesus in Matthew 15:32. You will see that Jesus had compassion on the crowd that had followed Him for 3 days and become very hungry. He knew they would faint if their bodies were not given food to eat. So He ordered that food be given to them. Couldn't they have just lived on His words alone? Where was their faith? After all, doesn't the Bible say, in Matthew 4:4, "Man shall not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" ?Surely they had heard enough words from God over the past three days to sustain them, but now they wanted food too. It is clear from this verse that man needs both natural bread and the bread of life that Jesus Christ provides in order to not only survive in this world, but to thrive in it.

Our immune system is our first natural line of defense against all natural causes of sickness, such as a person becoming ill from not washing their hands or from not cooking food properly. It is incredibly complex and awesome, and so is the work of the Holy Spirit within us. We try to simplify them the best we can, but simplifying them doesn't mean we have come to fully understanding them or the roles they play in our life.

What we do know is that a healthy immune system will protect us against foreign intruders, such as parasites and germs that lead to infections. We also know that, if those things do make their way into our body, then our immune system will fight against them and eliminate them. However, an unhealthy immune system doesn't have the ability to fight against these intruders as well so, over time, the battle is lost and many people die a premature, physical death simply because their immune system failed.

By understanding a little bit about how our natural immune system works, we can better understand how the Holy Spirit works within us supernaturally. Just as there are things we

must do to support a healthy immune system, there are similar things we must do that will support a healthy spiritual life. A healthy spiritual life is supported by the same 3 things that support a healthy immune system and they are: a **healthy diet** of the Word of God, **exercising** the Word of God in our life and **resting** in the presence of the Lord.

The Holy Spirit within us should be the Christian's first line of defense against all spiritual attacks around us that try to invade and infect our mind, will and emotions. Our mind should be made aware, by the Spirit of God, that our thoughts are under attack and that we need the power of the Holy Spirit to be released in us right at that moment in order to come against whatever is attacking us, and to subdue it and eliminate it from our life. The power of the Holy Spirit is released to come against that attack in our life the moment we declare, by faith, the promises of God over the situation that is coming against us. In fact, just to prove the power of speaking out words, please read Romans 10:13 and also Romans 10:10: "For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved."

Our natural body houses our immune system but, as mentioned earlier in Chapter 11, it also houses the Holy Spirit for in 1 Corinthians 3:16 we read, "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?"

The King James version of the Bible says it this way: "The Spirit of God dwells in you." This tells us that the Holy Spirit is not only in our midst, but He lives within us.

It is not enough for our body to simply be a dwelling place for the Holy Spirit to live and for our immune system to function; we have our part to play to determine how well they function within us.

If the immune system and the Holy Spirit are so important, how and why are they so neglected? The following little illustration will help to explain that. We often don't see the importance of something until we are in need of it or want to enjoy it.

Most people love the look of an English garden. Perhaps it's all the rain they get that helps to produce those beautiful flowers; perhaps it's the fact that the temperature does not get as bitterly cold in England as it does here in Ontario, Canada.

Or could it be that, although these things are true, perhaps there is also a gardener tending to the garden. Would good weather alone bring about such beautiful gardens? Of course not! It requires effort to get results. If you sit back and just smell the roses more than tend to them, it won't be long until they are overtaken by weeds. Soon your focus and energy shift from pruning the beautiful rose bushes to constantly pulling out the weeds. No gardener ever set out to only preoccupy himself with weeds. After all, what kind of enjoyment would that give a person who loves flowers?

From the illustration mentioned above, we can see that it takes effort to get favourable results. Being raised in a church doesn't guarantee that you will always enjoy an effective relationship with God, just as being born physically healthy doesn't guarantee that your immune system will remain strong if you neglect to take care of it. Each of us has the ability to choose to do the best we can where we are with what we have and, by doing that, we will reap the benefits that we desire.

As Christians, our ultimate example to follow is Jesus Christ. Throughout the Bible, in the Old and New Testament, we can see the importance of walking by the Spirit of God while also being a good steward of the physical body that God has given us.

Study Questions

- 1) What do you tend to more carefully, your physical needs or your spiritual needs?
- 2) Which of the three physical needs do you struggle with most? What changes can you make, starting today, to improve your health in this area?
- 3) Discuss with your group some eating disorders and problems they have caused (your own or people you know).
- 4) What is meant by “exercising the Word of God in our life?”
- 5) How does the immune system keep our body healthy?
- 6) How does the Holy Spirit help to keep our mind healthy?

Contact Information

To order additional copies of this book or for information about hosting a “With Christ in the School of Healing” course in your area, please contact Ian Wilson at 705-733-1307