

TC Ministries

Equipping the Church for the Work of Ministry

What the Bible Says About ...

DIVINE HEALING

What Christians Believe Series

Tony Case



Is it God's Will to
Heal Miraculously?



If God wants us sick,
then why do we seek
the help of Physicians?



If God wants us well,
why are there not more
Miraculous Healings in
the Church?



If you would like to know more
about this topic, or have any
questions about the Christian faith:

admin@tcministries.org.au

www.tcministries.org.au

THE ORIGIN OF ALL SICKNESS AND DISEASE

If sickness was not created by God in the beginning, if it was not part of God's original design for the human race, then where did it originate?

If it is foreign to real happiness and opposed to everything that God stands for regarding goodness, righteousness & blessing, why doesn't He remove it?

It is reported medically that we begin to die as soon as we are born, and that every occurrence of disease is an outworking of this inexorable law of death. Sickness is the shadow of the grave. People do not die because they are sick, they are sick because they are dying.

If we can therefore discover the cause of death, we have found the origin of sickness.

Fortunately, this is relatively easy to answer from Scripture:

- ◆ It is sin that brought forth death (Gen 2:17; Rom 5:12; 6:23).
- ◆ It is because we sin that we are sick, and because we are sick we die. So we must ask a further question - *"from where did sin originate?"*
- ◆ Rom 5:12 says that sin, as we know it, originated with one man - Adam. But what agent caused Adam and Eve to sin in the first place?
- ◆ Sin found its beginning in the subtlety of the serpent, Satan (Gen 3:1), who held the power of death and hell over our lives until Jesus came to forever destroy his works (1 John 3:8). However, we must still die naturally (Heb 9:27; Rev 20:13-14).

Sickness and disease were unknown on earth until man fell into sin. Adam's disobedience resulted ultimately with death (Rom 5:12).

We may therefore confidently conclude, based upon what we have just surmised biblically, that all sickness stems indirectly, and some sickness stems directly, from Satan.

Jesus went about *"doing good and healing all those who were oppressed by the devil"* (Acts 10:38), from whom all sickness originated.

- **All sickness** arises indirectly from sin. Sometimes sin may be part of a curse going down to the third or fourth generation (Ex 20:5-6; 34:7).
- **Some sickness** is caused directly by sin (John 5:14 *"sin no more"*).
- **Some sickness** is directly caused by the affliction of Satan or His followers (eg Job 2:7).
- **Sickness is not directly attributable to God.** Rather, it is a consequence of Man's direct or indirect violation of His righteous law. However, God will occasionally use disease as a method of discipline or of drawing us to maturity (Heb 12:11-13).

The true cause of human suffering is centred in sin, and the oppression of Satan. As long as the devil and sin holds sway in human affairs, sickness will have access to us and occasionally overpower us, unless we are protected by the blood covenant held in place by faith and obedience to God's Word.

Sickness and disease is a part of God's curse on disobedience (Deut 28), but note that:

- a) Christ took our infirmities and sicknesses (Matt 8:17).
- b) Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law (Gal 3:13).

Common Causes of Sickness

1. **The Natural (Physical) Realm:** (1 Cor 3:16,17 & Phil 2:25-30)
2. **The Emotional (Soulish) Realm:** worry, anxiety, fear, stress, bitterness, lack of forgiveness
3. **The Spiritual Realm:** Judgement or dealings of God (1 Cor 6:18-20; Job 2:5-8)
4. **Direct Attack from Satan:** (1 Pet 5:8; also *"a curse without cause cannot alight"* (Prov 26:2))

DIVINE HEALING - A NEW COVENANT PROMISE

A covenant, in biblical terms, is an unbreakable contract that is honoured by both parties. A blood covenant, such as that which was established when Jesus went to the cross on our behalf, is the most binding of all.

A covenant defines a relationship, and healing and restoration is one of the many covenant agreements God has made with Man. As far as God is concerned, this covenant is both binding and unbreakable.

This is why we have a firm basis for approaching God for healing, because at the centre of this issue is the binding promise God has made with the New Covenant Church that healing is available. In this we can have absolute faith and confidence.

In the Old Testament there were eight covenant names of God that proclaimed both His nature and his role in the covenant agreement:

- **Jehovah–Jireh:** The Lord our **Provider** - Gen 22:8,14/Phil 4:19
- **Jehovah–Rapha:** The Lord our **Healer** - Exod 15:26/1 Pet 2:24
- **Jehovah–Nissi:** The Lord our **Banner** - Exod 17:15/John 10:4
- **Jehovah–Qadesh:** The Lord our **Sanctifier** - Lev 20:8/Ez 20:12/1Cor 1:30
- **Jehovah–Shalom:** The Lord our **Peace** - Judges 6:24/Eph 2:14
- **Jehovah–Raah:** The Lord our **Shepherd** - Psalm 23:1/John 10:11
- **Jehovah–Tsidenkenu:** The Lord our **Righteousness** - Jer 23:6/Phil 3:9
- **Jehovah–Shammah:** The Lord **Ever Present** - Ezek 48:35/Matt 28:20

God proclaimed Himself Israel's healer. In fact, this is part of His eternal nature and does not change. That God is our healer is as relevant today as it ever was, and we can bank on that as 21st century believers.

When the New Covenant (or Testament) came along it fulfilled and replaced the Old Covenant and now we live in the light of those New Covenant promises.

Jesus, in his introductory message at the commencement of his ministry said this:

***"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because he has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favourable year of the Lord"* (Luke 4:18-19)**

He confirmed God's desire by continuing the covenant promise of God by making healing a major thrust of His earthly ministry:

***"And Jesus was going about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people"* (Matt 4:23)**

This is echoed in the New Testament in many places, such as:

***"Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in health, just as your soul prospers"* (3 John 2)**

The New Covenant Promise

The New Testament makes it plain that Jesus Christ assumed the responsibility of fulfilling to His church all the blessings of the covenant God had made with Israel.

God's desire is for His children to be whole, which includes healing of body, soul and spirit. Healing is the children's bread (Matt 15:21-28) and Jesus demonstrated His willingness to heal any and all who came to him in sincerity and faith.

“You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38)

JESUS' MINISTRY OF DIVINE HEALING

In studying the gospels it is reasonable to conclude that the central message appears to be one of healing. Healing is such an integral part of the gospel message and conveys God's deep desire to bring healing to His children.

A simple analysis of the healing ministry of Jesus shows the following:

1. The gospels contain more than 70 accounts of the healing ministry of Christ.
2. 500 verses, equal to fourteen average chapters, are devoted to His healing ministry – far more space than any other single subject or event given.
3. There are more than fifteen accounts of the Lord healing great crowds.
4. Literally thousands of miracles of healing and deliverance took place during the three years of His public ministry.
5. At least thirty individual miracles of healing are described in detail.

One of the most wonderful accounts of healing is in Mark's gospel (Mark 5:1-20), where the demoniac who Jesus delivered and healed sat ***“clothed and in his right mind”*** (Mark 5:15; Luke 8:35).

The Bible is full of accounts of divine healing – both Old and New Testaments.

“And Jesus was going about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness” (Matt 9:35)

Three Categories of Ministry

Jesus' ministry could safely be divided into three categories, with emphasis being given to each at the appropriate time. These three emphases were:

- ◆ Teaching of Kingdom Principles
- ◆ Casting out of Demon Spirits
- ◆ Administration of Divine Healing

The casting out of demons and divine healing can both be considered miracles.

Jesus also did other miracles not related to healing or casting out of demon spirits, such as turning water into wine, feeding the 5,000 and walking on water, but these things were not the major thrust of Jesus' earthly ministry.

Three Categories of Wholeness

The Bible deals with three express areas of healing (3 John 2):

- ◆ Healing of the ***Spirit***
- ◆ Healing of the ***Soul***
- ◆ Healing of the ***Body***

It is quite unnatural to desire to be unwell, in pain or discomfort, because God has placed within us a strong sense of self-preservation. We naturally seek healing when we are sick, whether we are believers or not. It is considered dysfunctional, even imbalanced, to think contrary to this. To be so self-destructive is, in itself, a condition in need of some sort of treatment.

HEALING OF SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY

Healing of spirit, soul and body must include divine healing, as well as divine health. Natural and spiritual principles should combine to form in a believer a strong, vibrant and healthy lifestyle.

Healing of the SPIRIT: speaks about salvation and eternal life, something only available through the born-again experience as we accept the work of Jesus on the cross for mankind.

Healing for the SOUL: involves mental and emotional (psychological) health and wellbeing. This is the main area of concern for most people, Christian and non-Christian alike. We may change from darkness to light in an instant in a spiritual sense, but adjusting our thinking, our attitudes and our emotional responses to be more Christ-like takes longer. An unhealthy soul can be a major factor in retarding the development of an otherwise spiritually mature believer. So it is with healing of an unhealthy body.

Healing for the BODY: involves physical healing and restoration, both to heal sickness or disease and to restore and maintain health. Much still needs to be learned about prevention of sickness and disease by natural, as well as by spiritual means, but divine, miraculous healing is promised in Scripture and practiced today by many believers.

Let's look at these three areas of *spirit*, *soul* and *body* in greater detail.

Healing of the Spirit

Commonly referred to as the born-again experience (John 3:3), healing of the spirit does not refer to a once-only experience. Being saved starts with an initial commitment, and must be maintained in order for it to grow and bear fruit. We must be continually filled by the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18).

This healing process, because of its eternal consequences, is of much more value than any other form of healing (Matt 10:28; Heb 10:31). It can also involve quite a long period of conviction, awakening, realisation, response, and even resistance. It is a process initiated by God's Spirit and available to everyone willing to open their hearts up to the true reality of their spiritual condition.

"God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble" (Jam 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5)

Without this experience we cannot see heaven, know God personally, or enjoy eternal security and peace.

Healing of the Soul

Healing of the soul is a much more involved process, and can be achieved by various methods or techniques. For the Christian, care must be taken if choosing such methods as hypnosis, spiritual counsel, medication, etc as they can have a mixture of positive and negative consequences if not considered wisely.

Healing and restoration of the soul is probably the most important area of concern after the **New Birth**, and takes much longer. It is where mental, nervous, emotional, and many physiological problems begin – and need resolving.

The spiritual battleground we face daily is primarily one of the soul involving the **mind, emotions** and **will** (Rom 12:1-2). We are to strive to be overcomers in this regard at all times.

Although God initiates the process of mind renewal, it is our responsibility to encourage this process forward, bringing forth fruit and maturity.

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom 12:2)

Healing of the Body

One of the great New Covenant benefits which come with salvation and restoration of our personal relationship with God the Father, through the Lord Jesus Christ, is physical healing.

Miracles of healing do happen, sometimes in outstanding and dramatic fashion! While this is certainly supported by Scripture, God will often use a slower, more progressive response to our prayers for physical healing.

Both types of healing have validity in Scripture, and both are reasonably common in churches where healing is believed for and preached as available through the work of the cross and the power of the Holy Spirit.

However, we must remember that God is not a magic wand we wave around whenever we are out of step with the spiritual and natural laws governing the universe. Instantaneous healing, whilst certainly available, is the unusual rather than the normal for many believers.

We must also be careful not to waste valuable time and energy on the symptoms and completely ignore the cause. Getting to the root cause of a sickness or disease is vital for genuine, long-term healing.

That not everyone gets physically healed by miraculous means is a fact we must be realistic about. Sometimes our attitudes are wrong, and our hearts are out of order with the Spirit of God, resulting in God being unable to act on our behalf.

At other times God chooses a slower method of recovery, which may involve medication, hospitalisation, an operation, or just rest and recuperation. Often this slower recovery process enables God to deal with us more effectively – adjusting our thinking, reactions and attitudes towards forgiveness, offence, bitterness, anger, or a host of other mindsets and habit patterns that may be wrong and counter-productive to the total healing and restoration process. These things often interfere with God’s ability to act purposefully and positively on our behalf.

If we always walk with God, obey Him, forgive others, deal with offences, walk in righteousness and faith etc, our chance of receiving healing is greatly enhanced, and our resistance to being sick in the first place greatly increased.

Doctors tell us that as much as 85% of physical infirmity is “**psychosomatic**,” meaning that a condition may be physical, but the original cause is cerebral, or in other words it originates in our thinking.

This is a vastly uncharted area for many churches, with the astonishing supposition that if we are able to help people to think properly, and react appropriately to things which happen to them in life, or have happened in the past, then this one change can potentially cure up to 85% of all physical infirmity!

This is where healing of the soul becomes paramount, and why a healthy church will focus time and energy dealing with attitudes and thinking processes. It pays handsome dividends because “*the truth will set you free*” (John 8:32).

When such teaching permeates a church or a group of believers, healings do occur, sometimes miraculously.

Often this will mean focusing more on the positive than the negative. At other times it will mean forgiving someone we have had an unforgiving attitude towards, or letting go a serious offence we have harboured and stewed over. What we bind on earth is often bound in heaven (Matt 16:19; 18:18), and Jesus called this a key to the kingdom of heaven.

“For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions” (Matt 6:14-15; see also Mark 11:25-26)

WHEN HEALING DOESN'T HAPPEN

First, we need to agree that it is God's will, nature and covenant to offer healing to all believers. Faith must also be involved at some point for healing to occur.

Prosperity and good health are commonly considered signs of God's blessing in the Bible. Whereas **poverty and sickness** as seen as evil and part of God's curse.

- Deut 7:12-16 - “I will remove all sickness from among you”.
- Deut 28:1-14 - A list of blessings that apply to those who obey God.
- Deut 28:58-63 - A converse list of curses applying to those who disobey God.

Spiritual Hindrances To Healing

There are also definite hindrances to healing which must be dealt with before long-term, divine, miraculous healing can take place:

1. An unforgiving spirit (Matt 18:23-25)
2. Unconfessed sin (James 5:14-16)
3. Persistent unbelief (Matt 13:58; 17:20)
4. Discord with fellow believers (1 Cor 11:29-33)
5. Purposeful disobedience and rebellion (Exod 15:26; Prov 4:20-22)
6. A sharp tongue (Prov 12:18; 15:4)
7. Improper marital relationships (1 Pet 3:1-7)

Discerning The Cause

It is important to discern the cause of sickness or disease in order to affect appropriate treatment. Wrong diagnosis of any illness may result in wrong treatment, especially spiritually, with potentially serious consequences.

Healing will often not take place if the cause of the problem is obscured or not accurately diagnosed (eg unforgiveness, bitterness, anxiety, fear, sin, disobedience, lack of true repentance, unbelief etc).

Sometimes divine healing will even appear to take place and later prove not to be permanent for the same reasons – failure to discern the cause. Sickness can also return because the true cause of the problem is not dealt with.

Any kind of suffering, including sickness or disease, should cause us to seek God, praying and searching Scripture for answers. Whether physical, spiritual, emotional, relational or psychological, complete healing is worth fighting for.

There are those who find security in infirmity, or for whom infirmity gratifies a certain perverse desire for attention, sympathy or chemical abuse. Resistance to truth may be subconscious but real, and may need patience and discernment to resolve.

Seeking Medical Advice

It should go without saying that to seek professional medical advice is always recommended, and it is impractical, immature and just plain foolish to ignore this advice in trying to manipulate God into healing us. Much damage is done when Christians choose to ignore good, sound medical advice in favour of a spiritual outcome that God has neither commanded nor called for.

The will of God for the believer surrounds healing and restoration of body, soul and spirit. God will use both natural and spiritual means to achieve this end, and he is not confined to one or the other, no matter our preference. It is faith that we need, and an understanding of God's Word in our particular situation. This will produce results that ultimately bring glory to God.

Four Aspects of Biblical Healing

1. **Healing is both a natural and divine process** – diet, exercise, good attitude and personal discipline (Prov 17:22; 1 Tim 5:23), as well as heeding the advice of medical professionals (Matt 9:12) all aid to a healthy, sickness-free lifestyle.
2. **Healing of the soul is also of vital importance.** Our attitudes and emotional well-being have a far greater effect on our lives than we often realise. Much of the New Testament deals with this (see Rom 12:1-2 and Eph 4:17-24).
3. **The atmosphere you surround yourself with** should be a healthy and uplifting one.
 - ♦ **Church** should be a place where the positive is emphasised and the negative is neutralised.
 - ♦ **Home** should be a place of harmony and love, a sanctuary, a place of security and training in the reality of the things of God.
 - ♦ **Work (or study) environment** is not always as easy to control, but where possible we should make it so, or consider whether anything less is healthy and productive.
4. **The expectation of miraculous, divine healing** for believers is supported by Scripture and available by the power and will of God.

"I am the Lord who heals all your diseases" (Psalm 103:1-5)

Means by which Healing can be received

- **Natural means:** diet, exercise, discipline (Prov 17:22; 1 Tim 5:23)
- **Medical profession:** Matt 9:12
- **Spiritual avenues:** such as prayer (James 5:13-15; Heb 11:6); laying on of hands (Mark 16:18); anointing of oil (James 5:14); the spoken word (Matt 8:5-13; Ps 107:20); communion (1 Cor 11:23-32); the 'gift' of healing (1 Cor 12:28); even miraculous means (Mark 7:31-37; 8:22-26; John 9:1-7; Acts 19:11-12; 5:15-16). God is not limited, and neither should we be!

Ultimately, We All Die!

Finally, it should be remembered that we all die, believer and unbeliever alike, and for some, this is God's plan and purpose – their time if you like! When our time is up, and we are called on to our reward, we need to be ready to exit this world with dignity and respect. Remember ...

"Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day" (2 Cor 4:16)