

WHY GOD ALLOWS SICKNESS

2. UNBELIEF

Here is another reason why many times people are not healed. It is that they refuse to believe that God can and will heal people. This is very true when we pray for someone with a terminal illness. Since it is beyond mans ability to do anything, we bring God down to our level and feel it is too late for this person. We may pray, but we also think, "They're dead!" That is wrong. For the God who created us can and does heal us many times.

In Matthew 13:53-58 we see that Jesus wanted to do mighty works but their unbelief hindered His work. Now please understand this, I am not talking about the power of faith controlling God, but just the faith of a mustard seed, the slightest amount of faith that opens the door for God to move as He wills. Lord, help us in our unbelief!

3. THE ABUSE

Today we see all kinds of abuse with this gift of healing. We see healers using sideshow tricks, growing a leg longer; pumping people up to make them think they are healed, and-so-on. This does not negate what God is doing, but it does dishonor Him.

4. THIS GIFT IS NOT GIVEN TO ALL

In I Corinthians 12:28-30 Paul is asking a rhetorical question, and the answer is, "No!" You see, not all of us have these gifts. The Holy Spirit gives this gift as He wills to whom He wills! Obviously this is a very outward gift and there can be much abuse with it, as we can see.

SICKNESS IN THE EARLY CHURCH

1. PAUL - II CORINTHIANS 12:7-10

II Corinthians says that Paul had a "thorn in the flesh," not the spirit. This was a physical problem that was not a small thorn, but literally a "tent spike." And many believe it was a severe and painful eye problem. (See Galatians 4:15, 6:11). The reason God allowed Paul to suffer this way was to keep him humble and trusting in the Lord. Paul even believed in physicians. He had his own personal one, Dr. Luke! Paul was a man of faith and yet he was sick!

2. TROPHIMUS - II TIMOTHY 4:20

In II Timothy 4:20 we see Paul leave Trophimus sick in Miletus. If Paul only knew of the faith formula, right? Wrong! If Trophimus only had more faith he could have been healed and traveled with Paul, right? Wrong! I'm sure Paul prayed for this man and in the sovereignty of God, he was still sick and Paul left him in Miletus to recover from this illness.

3. TIMOTHY - I TIMOTHY 5:23

Timothy had some kind of amebic dysentery from the water that gave him some bad stomach problems. We call it Montezuma's Revenge today and they had no Pepto Bismol to correct this problem! So Paul told him to add some wine to the water to kill the bacteria. Was that a lack of faith on Paul's part? No! Why didn't Paul pray for him? I'm sure he did and he also used the resources they had to help him, which was adding wine to kill off the bacteria, which would in turn help his stomach problem!

1. GOD ALLOWS SICKNESS TO CORRECT US

God does allow sickness in our life to correct us, to get us back on track as Paul tells us in Hebrews 12:5-6. Also, David tells us in Psalm 119:67 that affliction kept him in line with God; it drew Him close to the Lord and His word! Not all sickness is a result of us going astray, but some is!

2. IT BUILDS UP OUR FAITH

When we are weak, sick, we tend to lean more upon Him, depend upon Him more. Job saw this in all that he was going through and said, "But He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold." Job 23:10. In Isaiah 48:10 God says, "Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction." Trials, sickness, tend to build us up in the faith.

3. TO BRING GLORY TO GOD

The way we handle sickness, various situations, can either bring glory to God or not. When I first got diabetes my mom said to my wife, "I bet his faith is shaken now!" And Julie replied, "No, it has only strengthened his faith!" And that has been very true some 22 years later! You see, we need to let our light shine even, and especially, during those difficult times because it shows that our faith is real!

Yes God does heal today and the Holy Spirit does give this gift as He wills. Why are some of the most wicked people healed and dear saints of God get sick and die early in life? That is the sovereignty of God, and to try and figure it out is futile. Job spent many chapters trying to figure out the how's and why's of God and finally he learned the lesson, to trust God. You see, if you don't trust Him, you will make Him your adversary. If you know God, you won't have to know all the how's and why's, but you will learn to just trust in Him.

In Acts chapter 4 as we see the disciples pray we read beginning in verse 29, "Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus." And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness." Acts 4:29-31. Healing was part of the early church and the gifts of healings are still in operation today, as the Holy Spirit, "... works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills." I Corinthians 12:11. The Gifts of Healings!

What the Bible says about . . . Gifts of the Spirit Part 5

4. GIFTS OF HEALINGS

Another gift of the Spirit is the supernatural Gifts of Healings that is spoken of in I Corinthians chapter 12, where we read, "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given . . . gifts of healings by the same Spirit." I Corinthians 12:7-8a, 9b.

What I want you to notice in this description of this gift is that it speaks of, "gifts of healings" and not the, "gift of healing." It is in the plural form. Why would Paul do that? Because there are different types of gifts and different types of healings that take place as the Holy Spirit gives us this gift as He wills.

We love to place God in a box and have Him work only in a pre-described way, but with the gifts of healings there is no set pattern. I think the reason is simple, so that we can't come up with some formula to market the gifts of healings. These are grace gifts given to us by the Holy Spirit.

I love the way that James has us pray when someone is sick. He tells us this; "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven." James 5:14-15.

James says we are to call for the elders, plural, not that they alone can heal but for a group of people to pray together so that no one man can get the glory or the credit, only God. Now God does not always heal this way. sometimes it is through the prayer of one. It is as He wills.

We can look at the life of Jesus and see how He healed people. And as we study this we will see the variety of ways He worked. You see, it is not a, "Do it this way and God has to act this way" theology. Let me show you what I mean with just a few examples of how Jesus healed people in many different ways and how others healed in a variety of ways. There was no formula to follow. That is important for us to understand. People were healed as God desired, as He willed and not as we willed!



VARIOUS WAYS GOD HEALED PEOPLE

1. CENTURION'S SERVANT HEALED - MATTHEW 8:5-13

Here we see Jesus heal this Centurion's servant from a distance. That may shock some of you because we think that this gift of healing has to be done as you are in contact with the person. But here we see Jesus clearly heal this centurion's servant from a distance!

2. PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW HEALED - MATTHEW 8:14-15

Here we see Peter heal his mother-in-law as he touches her hand!

3. TWO BLIND MEN HEALED - MATTHEW 9:27-31

In Matthew chapter 9 we see two blind men come to Jesus, desiring to be healed, to receive their sight back. And here we see that Jesus touches their eyes and they are healed.

4. A BLIND MAN HEALED - JOHN 9:1-7

In John chapter 9 Jesus encounters a man who was born blind. We see Jesus spit on the ground, make some clay out of it, and then place it upon this man's eyes. Then He tells this blind man to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. And this man, who was led to the pool blind, came back seeing! Now don't go spitting on the ground and making some clay to place on someone's eyes unless the Lord tells you to. What I am showing you is the many ways this gift is in operation. There is no set way; it is according to the Spirit of God!

5. ANOTHER BLIND MAN HEALED - MARK 8:22-26

In Mark chapter 9 we see Jesus heal another blind man, but this time He spat on this man's eyes. Now I don't know about you, but healing at a distance would have worked for me, but Jesus spat on his eyes! Now as Jesus did this He also touched this man's eyes and asked him if he could see. This man said, "I see men like trees, walking." Mark 8:24. Jesus touched his eyes again and his sight was completely restored. It was not that Jesus was short on power the first time, but this is the way the Holy Spirit wanted to work in this man's healing.

6. PETER'S SHADOW - ACTS 5:15-16

We see here that people are getting healed as Peter's shadow passed by. A very unique way to heal, but that is what the Holy Spirit chose to do.

7. PAUL'S SWEATBAND - ACTS 19:11-12

Here we see another unusual way to be healed. They took Paul's sweatbands and placed them upon the sick and demon possessed, and they were healed. Luke tells us that God was working, "unusual miracles by the hand of Paul." Acts 19:11. This was not a normal way, but again this is how the Holy Spirit desired to work.

What I want you to notice that this is speaking of the gifts of healings, done many different ways, as the Spirit of God sees fit!

HEALINGS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. HEALING OF THE GENTILE SON BACK TO LIFE - I KINGS 17:17-24

In I Kings chapter 17 we see Elijah staying at a widow's house in Zarephath. One day her son got sick and he died. Elijah prayed and stretched himself out on this young man three times, and life was restored to him. This young man was brought back from the dead. He was healed!

2. HEALING OF NAAMAN OF LEPROSY - II KINGS 5:1-27

In II Kings chapter 5 we read the story of Naaman, the commander of the Syrian army, a good man, who had leprosy. He is told by his Jewish servant girl to go and see Elisha the prophet in Israel who would heal him. Naaman goes and after he humbles himself, he obeys the words of Elisha, dipping himself seven times in the Jordan River. We are told in II Kings 5:14, "So he went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." Naaman was miraculously healed of leprosy, an incurable disease!

HEALINGS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. THE HEALING OF THE MAN WITH A WITHERED HAND - MATTHEW 12:9-13

In Matthew chapter 12 we see Jesus go into a synagogue and meet a man with a withered hand. Word had gotten out of what Jesus could do, and the people knew, even though it was the Sabbath, that Jesus was going to heal this man. That is exactly what Jesus did, as verse 13 of Matthew chapter 12 tells us. We read, "Then He said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' And he stretched it out, and it was restored as whole as the other." Here this man with the withered hand was healed!

2. HEALING POWER GIVEN TO THE APOSTLES - MATTHEW 10:1

In Matthew chapter 10 we read, "And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease." The healing power that Jesus had was given to His apostles. Thus, some will argue that this is where this gift ends, with the apostles! That is wrong as we will see in a minute. First let me say this, the apostles, as with Jesus, did many miracles and yet they did not heal everyone. The sovereignty of God was the issue then as it is now!

3. POWER TO HEAL GIVEN TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE - MARK 16:15-18

In Mark 16:15-18 we read, "And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.'"

Who can heal? Jesus says all those who believe! That includes us, not just the apostles. Again, that doesn't mean we can heal at will, but the Holy Spirit gives this gift as He wills. That is very important for us to understand! And it is important for us to understand that God still heals today. In fact, He has healed everyone of us who has come to Him. He has cured us of our sin and brought us to the Father. That truly is the best healing, an everlasting healing!

4. PETER HEALS THE LAME MAN - ACTS 3:1-11

In Acts chapter 3 we see a lame man who sat at the Gate Beautiful at the Temple begging for alms. This man was 40 years old, and sat at this gate during the time of Jesus' earthly ministry. I'm sure Jesus saw him every time He went to the Temple, and yet Jesus did not heal him. But here we see Peter and John going to the Temple to pray and they encounter this man.

Peter says to him, "... 'Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.' And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them - walking, leaping, and praising God." The lame man was healed!

Now why isn't God healing more today? There are a few reasons we can look at. We have covered some of them, but I think it is important to understand this issue so we don't become discouraged.

WHY GOD DOESN'T HEAL ALL

1. GOD IS SOVEREIGN

Some feel that Jesus healed everyone He came in contact with but that is not true. Let me give you a few examples. In John chapter 5, at the pool of Bethesda we see all the lame, the crippled, come and wait for the waters to be stirred, because the first one in when this occurred would be healed. That is what they believed. There was a large crowd of lame people just waiting for this healing to occur in their life yet Jesus healed only one lame man!

We can also look at Acts chapter 3 where we saw the lame man sitting at the gate of the Temple during the time of Jesus and he wasn't healed by Jesus. The point is God is sovereign. He heals in His time and He heals those whom He wants to heal. We must not forget that. Those in the positive confession movement believe they can use a positive formula to get healings from God. But, if you say anything negative, then those negative words you spoke will create a negative power and that will happen to you. That is foolish!

Maybe you have heard of this story of three men traveling in a car and the driver asked the friend next to him, "How's your brother doing?" The man responded by saying, "He's really sick!" Quickly the driver responded, "Don't say that negative thought. Say that he thinks he is sick!" The driver then turned to the man in the back seat and asked, "How's your sister doing?" And he responded by saying, "She thinks she's dead!" Silly, yes, but this is the reality of what they teach.