

Healing is one of God's Benefits

The story is told of a young Irishman who once sought to purchase a boat fare to America, where he hoped to immigrate. From his years of savings, he discovered that he had sufficient to pay the fare, but not enough to pay for his meals aboard the ship. However, determined to seek the opportunity for a new life, he booked his passage and managed to scrape a few cents together for a meager bag of cheese and stale bread to carry him through his long journey.

One evening during the first two weeks at sea, the Captain was walking the deck when he noticed the Irishman sitting near the bow eating his cheese and bread.

"Why aren't you in the galley eating supper with the other passengers?" asked the Captain. The Irishman replied, "I regret sir that I only had sufficient funds to buy passage, but not enough to pay for meals." The Captain looked at him curiously and said, "Son, didn't you know that when you bought your ticket that your meals were included with your fare?"

Just as the Irishman didn't realize that his meals were a benefit paid for in the price of his ticket, many Christians are unaware that Christ's atonement on the cross paid for other benefits besides eternal life. The psalmist said, "Don't forget all the Lord's benefits! He forgives all your sins, and also heals all your diseases!" (Psalm 103:2-3).

Healing is a Part of Christ's Atonement

Due to mankind's sin, which brought separation from God's fellowship, God sent Jesus to endure the sufferings and the brutal execu-

tion on the cross, "in our place," as our substitute, so that all mankind could have a "bridge" back to the fellowship and benefits of God. "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21).

Jesus not only purchased the salvation of our soul, but His sufferings also secured our physical healing. In fact, the word "salvation" so frequently used in the New Testament, comes from the Greek, SOTERIA, which means "wholeness and healing, both in the physical and spiritual."

Years before Jesus came to the earth, the prophet Isaiah described the sufferings of the Savior and their reason. He wrote, "Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:4-5).

The stripes mentioned by Isaiah were the awful lashings upon Jesus' back by the Roman whips. Thirty nine stripes were the traditional punishment for a condemned prisoner. According to the scripture, these stripes upon Christ were in behalf of our healing (1 Peter 2:24). Coincidentally, several years ago the American Medical Association Journal published an interesting article which traced all the world's diseases to thirty nine root sources. A coincident? Not hardly. Jesus bore a stripe for every disease known to mankind.

It's God's will to heal

Since the Bible indicates that healing is a part of the reason of our Lord's sufferings, and

is inseparable from the idea of salvation, we must assume that it is as much God's will to heal you as it is to save you! And of course we know that the Lord wants everyone to be saved (2 Peter 3:9).

Furthermore, the four Gospels show that during Jesus' earthly ministry, there were eleven occasions that persons approached Jesus for healing. Not once did Jesus turn anyone away or state that it was not His will. This is significant since the Bible is intended to show God's will for man. In one instance, a leper came to Jesus inquiring whether it was His will to heal him. He said, "Lord, if it is your will you can heal me." Jesus extended his hand and said, "It's my will; Be healed!" And the man's leprosy vanished (Matthew 8:2-3).

The scriptures confirm repeatedly that Jesus went about "...healing all who were oppressed by the devil..." (Acts 10:38). It also says, He went to the villages and towns... "healing every sickness and every disease among the people." (Matthew 9:35).

We know that from history, many people derived their names by what they did for a living. For instance, those named "Smith" came from generations of blacksmiths. It was a good way for a person to advertise their trade, "I'm Walter the Smith." Similarly, God identifies His own name by what He does. In the Old Testament, God says that His name is JEHOVAH RAHPA, or "I am the LORD that heals you" (Exodus 15:26).

Think of it! God says that His name is "The Lord that heals you!" How could God reveal His will more clearly than to give himself a name that says He heals you? Not only is it His will, it's His name - it's who He is and what He does!

Five Steps to Receive Healing from God

(1) Submit yourself to God – As much as it is God's will and desire to heal, such things as unconfessed sin, disobedience, unbelief, or unforgiveness toward others can hinder your reception of healing, and in some instances, could actually be the original cause of your illness. Any affliction should be a time for self-examination, to come before the Lord in humility, surrendering yourself and drawing near to Him. James wrote, *"Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up"* (James 4:7-10).

(2) Look to God's Word – Read and meditate continuously upon the healing promises in the Bible. As you let them absorb into your inner man, it will bring a great sense of assurance. This is the confidence of faith that comes as you open your heart to the Word of God (Rom 10:17). *"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"* (Proverbs 4:20-22). How important it is that we focus upon God's Word, as this is the source of His healing power. *"He sent His word and healed them, And delivered them from their destructions"* (Psalms 107:20).

(3) Pray in Faith – Place your faith in the finished work of Christ's sufferings in behalf of your sickness or disease. Christ has already paid for your healing and has placed it into effect, making it available to you. Now it's up to you

to accept His finished work by faith. *"Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them"* (Mark 11:24).

(4) Call for Church Elders – Request for the elders or ministers of the church to anoint you with oil and pray the prayer of faith over you. The Bible says, *"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). Notice that it says the prayer of faith SHALL SAVE THE SICK! Ask the elders and other believers to lay hands on you and pray. *"...they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover"* (Mark 16:18). Again, notice that it says THEY WILL RECOVER!

(5) Keep Believing – Don't stop praying and believing! This is the most common reason why some people don't receive healing. They get discouraged and give up their faith. Most would prefer to have instantaneous healing, but most healings occur gradually over time. Be patient and be steadfast in your faith. Keep praising and thanking Him for your answer. God will be faithful to His Word, if you will be faithful to believe! *"...Do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises"* (Hebrews 6:12).

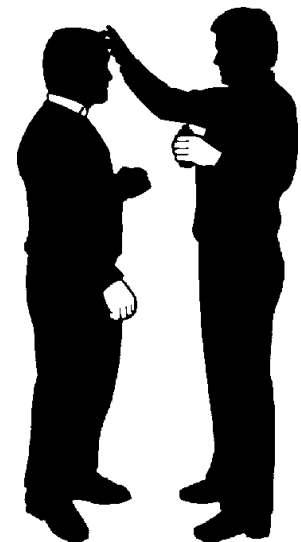
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www.victorious.org info@victorious.org

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By Dr. Dale A. Robbins