

GOD'S PROVISION FOR HEALING

Firm Foundation Chapter 8

by

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6/21/88

The Origin of Sickness

Before man had sinned, there was no sickness or disease upon the earth. God had protected man from pain, sickness, and death. However, "man lost the blessing and protection of God and came under a curse and the power of the devil **by turning away from God is disobedience**" (Gen. 3:16-19). People who turn away from God "put themselves under the Lordship of Satan" and under his mercy. The devil is the one who oppresses men with sickness (Acts 10:38). God gives all people a choice: to choose Him and His ways and receive His protection, or to choose to turn away from Him and lose His protection (Deut. 30:19).

God Gives Us a Choice

Under the Old Covenant, God would not allow any diseases of the world to come upon those who obeyed Him (Ex. 15:26). God promised to bless the bread and water of those who served Him and to take sickness away from their midst (Ex. 23:25).

On the other hand, terrible sickness comes upon those who disobey God's Word and refuse to fear Him (Deut. 28:58-61). Sickness also comes upon those who hate God's people (Deut. 7:15). God gives us a choice.

God desires for us to choose the blessing rather than the curse by "**loving the Lord your God, and by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him**" (Deut. 30:20). God assures us that as we trust in Him and make Him our refuge, then no evil will befall us nor will any plague come near our dwelling place (Ps. 91:9-10). God has provided a way for us to be saved from both sin and sickness under the New Covenant.

We can be Healed through Jesus

Jesus came to the earth to destroy the works of the devil, including sickness. Isaiah prophesied that Jesus' atoning death would heal us of our diseases:

Because of our sins He was wounded, beaten because of the evil we did. We are healed by the punishment he suffered, made whole by the blows He received. (53:5 GNB)

1 Pet. 2:24 says that "by His wounds we are healed." Jesus died and rose from the grave, thereby breaking the power of sin, death, and sickness in those who will receive it by faith.

Furthermore, Jesus lives today and is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). Just as Jesus was anointed with power from the Holy Spirit to heal people while He was on the earth, we can also receive this healing power from our eternal God **by faith**.

Jesus healed all those who came to Him in faith, regardless of their disease. Similarly, we

must have faith (trust in His Word) that He will heal us as He said He would. However, **Jesus did not heal many people when they had unbelief**. Similarly, we might not get healed if we have unbelief or if we do not ask to be healed (James 4:2b).

Several Methods God Uses to Heal Us

All healing that comes to us comes from God. God can use a variety of different methods by which we can be healed. We need to seek God for the proper method He desires for us to use in faith. People can be healed by God: by the laying on of hands of Christians or of person with the gift of healing, or by the anointing of oil by an elder, or by simply trusting God, or by seeing a doctor and taking medicine.

1. Laying on of Hands

One method in which God uses to heal people is by having Christians lay hands on the sick and pray for them in faith. In Mark 16:17-18, the Bible says that "these signs will accompany those who believe... they will lay hands on the sick and they will recover." I recently had the privilege of being used by God on 6/5/88 to lay my hand on my sick roommate, Elias, and pray for him. He wrote me a short letter the next day saying:

I believe I got healthy due to your prayer. If you did not say a prayer, I would be sick for a longer period. I want to thank you for it. Now, I am beginning to believe that prayer can be a powerful weapon sometimes.

2. The Gift of Healing

Although every believer in Christ has been given authority to lay hands on the sick and to pray in faith for them to be healed, God has given some people the special ability (gift) to serve as a human intermediary through whom it pleases God to cure illness and restore health apart from the use of natural means (I Cor. 12:9,28). These people have been gifted to pray and believe God for healings in a greater degree than others without this gift. I remember an incident about one and one-half years ago when the prophet and "healer", Rusty Russel, had a "word of knowledge" during a church service about my lady friend, Carolyn. She had a pain in her lower spine for the past 20 years, and she would always hurt when she sat down. Rusty laid his hand on her and prayed in faith for her to be healed. A miracle happened and she gave a testimony of how God healed her and that she no longer has a pain when she sits down. Being full of faith, she asked him to pray for her knees since she could not bend her knees to touch the ground with her hands. God almost completely healed her of this too and the swelling that she had on one of her knees was reduced in size. In front of the whole congregation, she bent down to touch the floor and did not express any pain. It was exciting.

3. Prayer of an Elder

God will often use an elder or pastor to heal a person. **James 5:14** explains what the elders of the church are to do for a sick Christian:

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.**

As a result of this prayer offered in faith, the Lord will heal the sick Christian and God will forgive his sins if he had committed any (James 5:15). I remember when I had a sore throat at an MSPN a couple months ago. I sensed that God desired for me to believe that He would heal me if I would obey the scripture in James 5:14. I asked Pastor Frank Gennaro to anoint me with oil and to pray for me, and I expressed my faith that I believed that I would then be healed, as the Scriptures assure. Truly, God upheld His Word to heal me. My throat was no longer unbearable, though there was still a small trace of soreness left. As I was driven home, I continuously thanked God for the healing and thanked Him also for a the complete healing that would take place soon (which it did).

I did not think that I was sick as a result of any hidden sin, but I had told Pastor Franco that I probably got a little sick as a result of getting very little sleep the past few nights due to the demanding pressures of my school work. Sickness can come as a result of a person neglecting to take good care of his body--by not eating or sleeping properly. The Bible mentions that sickness can also come at certain times as a test from God, as in the case of Job. When we are sick, how do we respond to it? Do we murmur and complain, or do we trust God for the healing and thus allow God to also produce character in us by successfully going through a trial. Regardless of the reason why we are sick, the ultimate source of sickness comes from the devil.

4. Trusting God

Another method God uses to break Satan's control over a sick person is for us to have simple child-like faith in accepting God's Word as truth in what Jesus Christ has already done. The Bible says that if we ask in faith for anything according to God's will, then we will receive it so that our joy may be full (John 15:24; Matt. 21:22). When Jesus lived on the earth, people asked Him for healing and received, and we can do the same now. Furthermore, the Scriptures say that Jesus took our sickness and carried away our diseases by the wounds that he bore on the cross (Matt 8:17; II Pet 2:24). I remember when Pastor Frank Gennaro was "as sick as a dog" about two and one-half years ago as a result of eating a rotten strawberry. Realizing that he would have to teach the Spiritual Maturity class on "Faith" the next day, he knew that he had to apply the principles himself. The next day, God had healed him as he had fervently prayed to God and simply believed that Jesus had already taken his sickness on the cross. Mary Lou, his wife, explained that "he made it through himself" by trusting God. Although several guys had prayed for Frank the day before, the primary burden of believing God rested on him, and God honored his faith.

5. Natural Means of Healing

We must not overlook the possibility of God healing us through doctors and common medicines. "Every good thing bestowed, and every perfect gift comes from above, from the Father of lights" (James 1:17). As we trust God for healing, He might indicate to us to go to a doctor or to

take a certain medicine. The important thing to remember is that whatever we do, we must do in faith. King Asa did not trust in God; instead, he went to a doctor without consulting God.

King Hezekiah and King Asa

King Hezekiah was a man who walked with the Lord in truth with his whole heart. When he was sick, He prayed to the Lord for healing and **the Lord heard Hezekiah's prayer and added 15 years to his life** (II Kings 20:1-6).

On the other hand, King Asa followed God but not fully. He put his trust in the arm of the flesh--in man not in God. As a result of this and putting one of God's prophets in prison, King Asa became diseased in his feet. "His disease was severe, yet even in his disease **he did not seek the Lord, but the physicians" and he died** (II Chr. 16:12-13).