

Praying for Healing According to God's Way

"Pray for one another, so that you may be healed."

James 5:16

Sickness and death entered the world when Adam and Eve sinned. Even before Adam fell, God had a plan in place for man's redemption. The Word is filled with examples of God's willingness to bring salvation for sin and to provide healing for our bodies. One of His covenant names is "Jehovah Rapha," the LORD who is Our Healer," or literally, "the LORD who is our health." (Ex. 15:6, 26) He has given His Church the gift of healing as part of the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Word makes it clear that we are to pray for one another to be healed. Yet there are times we can each recount when God's people prayed and the person was not healed. When we pray for healing, we need to have a full understanding of God's Word as it relates to His sovereignty and purposes. It is important not to oversimplify passages related to healing or to take them out of context...teachings regarding the Kingdom of God, confession of sin, God's forgiveness and heart preparation are clearly aspects of the prayer for healing. Isa. 53:5; Matt. 8:16-17; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3 John 1:2; 1 Cor. 3:16; Acts 19:11-12; Mark 16:17-18; James 5:14-16; 1 Cor. 12:9; Ps. 133; Jer. 30:12-17; Matt. 9:12-13; Ps. 103:1-5; John 14:12; Matt. 4:23

During my lifetime, I have seen the Church grow in their faith that God does heal in our day. I have also seen believers become so focused upon the gift of healing that they have almost forgotten the pursuit of God who is not only Our Healer but also Our Righteousness, Our Sanctifier and the Pourer Forth of Blessings. Apart from Him we can do nothing! Our eyes must always be upon relationship with the LORD and His purposes and not become focused upon just praying for physical needs. He calls us to seek and love HIM with all of our hearts, minds, souls and spirits and promises that He cares for our physical needs as well as our spiritual needs. The gift of healing was given to validate the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus to be ministered as a part of the Great Commission (Matt 6:33)

The Word of God is a cohesive whole. Our understanding of God's ways in healing will not come from a certain passage, but must be consistent with the full picture of the Father's heart and ways through all of the Word. The Word of God is a "two-edged sword." The picture of a two-edged sword is significant for a number of reasons: 1) A two-edged sword has two extremely sharp blades. It is able to cut in two directions with perfect balance. 2) In Latin, the phrase two-edged sword, is used as a metaphor for that which has both favorable and unfavorable consequences. In the Greek, the word used for two-edges means literally "two mouthed." This is believed to mean the Word spoken from God's mouth. In Eph. 6:17, the word is described as a sword of the Spirit. The word in this case is rhema, or literally the word spoken clearly, vividly, with unmistakable term with undeniable language. God's Word present truth that in its balance cuts in two directions, offering blessings and cursing, wounding and healing, life and death, light and darkness. We must seek to look for the balance that comes from God's whole word. There is incredible power that comes when we speak forth the Word that God has spoken to us (two-mouthed). 2 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 4:12; Rev. 1:16; 3:19; Eph. 6:17; Acts 20:27-31

A popular TV evangelist recently insisted that he was not responsible to teach what he does not understand in the Word and for that reason his scope of ministry is just to focus upon what makes people happy. Almost as if with a wave of his hand, he dismissed anything that was contrary to his “feel good” Gospel. His church flourishes with thousands coming to hear a message in which sin, suffering and the Cross are never addressed. One has to wonder how long his gospel will sustain an individual when they face trials and testings for which they have no understanding or preparation.

Joy Dawson is an internationally-known Bible teacher who spent years of immobilization while suffering with an agonizing back injury when her prayers and the prayers of believers around the world for her healing appeared to go unanswered. She has written a book called “Some of the Ways of God in Healing.” She quotes the words of a hymn from an old Baptist hymnal written in 1858 by George Rawson. These words are as pertinent to this discussion as when they were written so long ago.

*We limit not the truth of God,
To our poor reach of mind,
By notions of our day and sect,
Crude, partial and confined;
No, let a new and better hope
Within our hearts be stirred:
The LORD has yet more light and truth
To break forth from His Word.*

*Who dares to bind to his dull sense
The oracles of heaven
For all the nations, tongues and climes
And all the ages given?
That universe, how much unknown!
That ocean unexplored!
The LORD has yet more light and truth
To break forth from His Word.*

*O Father, Son and Spirit, send
Us increase from above;
Enlarge, expand all Christian souls
To comprehend Thy love:
And make us to go on to know
With nobler powers conferred,
The LORD has yet more light and truth
To break forth from His Word.”*

Lord, we pray with greater need than ever, “Teach us Your Ways!” Teach us Your ways in healing! Let Your Light and Truth lead us and bring us to Your Holy Mountain, to meet with You. We desire to sit at

Your feet and allow You to teach us, as Your disciples, to understand Your ways in healing! We have questions and we humbly seek You for wisdom and understanding.

Moses is one who cried out to God to teach him His ways. *“And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. ... thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people.”*
Ex 33:11-13 (KJV)

The Hebrew word for “ways” is ‘derek (Strong’s #1870) that means the path worn by constant walking. It speaks of one’s habits and patterns of life. It describes one’s journey or mission. It is often used to speak of the “ways of the LORD.” The ways of the Lord give insight into His heart, His motives, and the purpose of His journey.

Ps. 103:7 He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the sons of Israel. Israel saw what God did but could not understand His purposes, but Moses was given understanding of His ways. In knowing His ways, he became intimately acquainted with His heart, motives, passions and purposes.

Note that there are many aspects of God’s ways that are unchanging and eternal. These are the things about God that we can know for sure. Beside each verse write down what this verse teaches you about ways. Also note how far our own ways are from His ways!

Isa. 55:7-9

Isa. 65:1-2

Isa. 53:6

Ps. 25:1-5

Ps. 86:11

Jer. 9:23-24

Ps. 27:11

Ps. 51:10-13

Ps. 119:33-40

God is sovereign in all His ways. One truth that should give us great comfort is that God is sovereign over our bodies, including “defects,” sickness and disease. We also know that **all of God’s ways are filled with His love, mercy and justice.** Not only is God our Creator, who individually forms us in the womb, nothing touches us apart from His divine will. Ps. 119:91. Ex. 4:11; Ps. 139; Deut. 32:39; Ps. 145:17; Deut. 32:4; Ez. 14:23; Lev. 26:16; Deut. 7:15; 2 Sam. 24:14; Deut. 28:17; Ps. 88:3,4,6; 2 Sam. 12:15; 2 Chron. 21:18; Ps. 32:3-4, 38:2; 39:10; Isa. 38:15; Mic 6:13; Luke 9:1; Acts 12:23; Ps. 118:18; Isa. 30:6; Lam. 3:31-32; Nah. 1:12-13; Ps. 66:10-12; Isa. 54:7-8; Ps. 71:20-22; Ps. 30:5; Ps. 91:14-16; Ps. 68:6; Isa. 43:1-2; Isa. 45:6-7

What are God's purposes? Even though God does not cause all sickness, nothing touches us apart from His sovereign permission. It is natural when we are in the midst of sickness or pain to ask "Why?" When we draw near to God with a seeking heart, He will draw near to us. Knowing His ways will help us to understand His plans and purposes so that we can pray under His leading and without presumption, which is a form of spiritual pride. The Spirit-Filled Life Study Bible has a note related to Ps. 19:13 that states, "Faith is not presumption. Authentic faith is founded on the promises of God in His Word; it is not presumption. Presumptuous ideas about faith lead to attitudinal or behavioral sin, to missing the mark of faith's true meaning. Presumptuous attitudes are present when in the name of faith, a person either thinks "faith is wishful thinking or a fanciful attitude" assuming God should relieve all their discomfort and "jump" to their request; or 2) rejects any responsibility on their heart to offer a devoted heart and the commitment to serve Him regardless of their life condition. Presumption desires the promises of God without living a life for God and is hypocritical in His sight. Matt. 15:8" The notes conclude with instruction to root our faith in His redemption and not what we 'gain' and to develop our own faith, seeking to grow in intimate relationship with the Author and Finisher of our faith so we are known as His and found in Him.

- a. God's ultimate purpose is that we would be conformed to the image of His Son, Jesus Christ and to be prepared to spend eternity with Him. God's eternal purposes for His children are that we will live and reign with Him and He uses suffering to shape and form us for this purpose. Rom. 5:3-4; 2 Cor. 1:4; 2 Cor. 4:17
- b. God allows sickness and death and healing for His glory. Our highest purpose is to glorify the Father. Giving God the glory when things go well is of value but a far greater value is achieved when we do this in the midst of unanswered needs. John 11:4; John 9:3
- c. To demonstrate His grace is sufficient whether we are healed or not healed. Job 13:15; 2 Cor. 12:7-9; Ps. 145:17
- d. Not everyone gets healed or healings are delayed until His purposes are completed. There are times when it is His purpose for the person to remain in their situation and live by faith when it appears God does not hear our cries. Jesus did not respond to Mary and Martha's cries regarding the illness of Lazarus initially, but it was so He could perform a greater miracle of raising him from the dead. 2 Tim. 4:20; Gal. 4:13-15
- e. He may use illness as a form of God's chastisement or discipline for those He loves. When God disciplines His children, He may bring wounding but, in the end, His will is to heal. Example: Miriam Num. 12:15-16; King Uzziah 2 Chron. 16:16-21; King Jehoram 2 Chron. 21:18-19; Hezekiah, and Asa 2 Chron. 16:12. Note: We must be extremely careful not to wrongly judge or question the appropriateness of God's actions. While God does use chastisement to discipline us, it is mentioned more frequently in the Old Testament than in the New Testament. There are far more references to Satan's works than God's use of sickness to chastise. God allowed Job's trials and set limits on Satan's actions but He allowed Satan entrance into Job's life with a redemptive purpose in mind. When God disciplines, there is a beginning and end point to His time of discipline. Balance understanding of His use of discipline with the fact that in the New Testament, He healed everyone who came requesting healing. It is clear His purpose in chastisement is for our salvation, which

includes wholeness, healing and safety of body, soul and spirit. Gen. 50:20; Luke 13:2; Heb. 12:5-13; Rev. 3:19; John 9:1-3; 1 Cor. 5:1-5, 1 Cor. 11:30-32; Jer.12:7; 31:20; Ps. 118:17-18

- f. Sickness and pain can be a time of testing from God. He examines our hearts to see if we will respond in humility when not all goes according to our plans. Will we continue to trust Him and love Him in the midst of adversity? Deut. 8:6; Prov. 17:3; Jer. 11:20, 1 Pet. 5:10; 2 Pet. 2:9; Ps. 11:4-5; Ps. 9:8-10; Ps. 71: 20-21; Ps. 94:9; Ps. 146:8; Matt. 11:5; Luke 1:20,64
- g. God delays His answers at times to teach us to continue to cry out to Him and not give up. Matt. 15:22; Luke 18:35-37; Phil. 2:26-27; Luke 17:10; Ps. 107:6, 18-19; 28
- h. Pray for wisdom to discern God's appointed times. There is an illness that leads to death and there is an illness that does not lead to death. There is a God appointed time to die. God knows that day even before Ps. 116:15; Eccl. 3:1-8; Ps. 139:16; Ps. 121:5-8; Ps. 31:15; John 10:27-29

When we understand that God is sovereign over our sickness and afflictions in our body, we must keep in mind that does not mean that God is the source of all illness or injury. He is able to make all things work together for good. His plans are always redemptive. He wounds but he also heals. He chastises so that we may be healed. God's ultimate end is that we would be healed. He wants us to pray for healing and to persevere in prayer. Our spiritual lives and our physical lives are connected. If all aspects of our spiritual life are not in order, we can have physical side effects. 3 John 1:2

When God does not answer our prayers for healing, we should ask Him to search our heart and show us if there are any hindrances to His willingness to heal us. Ask Him to show you if any of the following factors may be affecting or hindering His healing from coming to us.

- a. The devil comes to steal, kill and destroy. The Word makes it clear that he is also a source of illness or infirmity. We need to pray for discernment to recognize the works of the enemy vs. those of the Father. Jesus came to destroy all of the works of the evil one. He has given us authority over the works of the devil. John 10:10; Luke 13:11-16; Acts 10:38; 2 Cor. 12:7; 1 Cor. 5:4-5; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 4:4; Isa. 59:19; James 4:7; 2 Cor. 2:14
- b. There are physical laws in this world which God created that contribute to sickness and disease. To have good health we need to observe God's natural laws and eating and fitness. We were created with a physical body that responds to neglect and mistreatment! If we do not care for our bodies with adequate rest and nutrition, we probably will become sick. Those who do not respect their bodies as temple of the Holy Spirit and abuse it with drugs, alcohol etc. open doors to physical issues. 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 1 Cor. 6:12, 19,20; Luke 4:12
- c. Sin: Unconfessed sin or disobedience can open us to become ill. God can use illness to show us the need to get into a right relationship with Him. Ps 139:23; James 1:12-16; Ps. 107:17, Lam 3:32-33; Gal. 6:7; Ps. 119:75; Prov. 3:7-9; Ps. 32:1-5; Num. 11:4-33; 1 Cor. 11:17-34; Job 5:17-18; 1 John 1:9
- d. Anxiety and fear: It are well proven that worry and stress cause physical side effects. The LORD wants us to cast all of our anxieties upon Him and allow Him to bear our burdens. Ps. 55:22; Matt. 6:25, 31-34; Ps. 37:5; Phil. 4:6,7; Matt. 11:28; 1 Pet. 5:7
- e. When we hold onto unforgiveness in our hearts, we will be turned over to the tormenters unto we do forgive. Unforgiveness is a barrier to getting healed. Bitterness is an extremely destructive force in our minds, bodies, souls and spirits. Our wholeness may be dependent upon choosing to forgive

others who have wronged or hurt us. Prov. 14:30; Job 5:2; Heb. 12:15. Joy Dawson, in her book, "Some of God's Ways in Healing," devotes an entire chapter to the importance of forgiveness. The following steps are adapted from her book, p. 54-57

- We cannot be assured that our prayers will be answered if we have resentment in our hearts. Matt. 6:12; Mark 11:24,25; Luke 17:3-6; Job 42:10
- First take the beam out of our own eye, by asking the LORD to show us our sin and unforgiveness, if we first understand God's forgiveness for our sin, it will be possible for us to forgive others for their sins.
- We must realize that we will not be forgiven by God for our sins if we are not willing to forgive others. Matt. 6:14-15 Meditate upon all that God has done for us, all that He has forgiven us, and thank Him for His great mercy. Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13
- Choose to forgive others and ask the LORD to show you any unforgiveness that is residing in your heart. Forgiving others is a choice and an act of the will. We can ask the LORD to give us His supernatural love for those who have offended us and receive it by faith. 1 Pet. 4:8; Rom. 5:5; Heb. 11:6; 1 John 3:17,18

How do we pray? The Word gives us strategies based on an understanding of God's Ways. These strategies are not meant to be used as a formula, but are based on the Word's instructions to us regarding prayer!

"When Jesus had called the Twelve together, He gave them power and authority to drive out all demons, and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the Kingdom of God and to bring healing." Luke 9:1-2 Read the following verses and note that preaching and teaching the Kingdom of God always accompanied instructions to heal. Luke 9:1-2; Matt. 9:35; Luke 10:1; Luke 10:9; Ps. 103:1-3

- The Word teaches us that we enter His gates with thanksgiving in our hearts and enter His courts with praise. He promises us that if we draw near to Him, He will draw near to us. As we worship and thank Him for who He is, our eyes are lifted beyond the situation and need to see Him in all of His glory and power. When we express our thanksgiving in every circumstance and for every circumstance, we give Him the honor, glory and respect that belongs to Him.
- Confess in great humility to the LORD that we do not know how to pray as we ought. That apart from Him we can do nothing! Ask Him for His wisdom and direction, knowing that there are no formulas or "one size fits all prayer" for healing. Presumption is a form of spiritual pride and we must be careful never to presume we know what God is attempting to work in our life or another person's life. God's ways are higher than our ways and His purposes are beyond our knowing. We always want to lift our eyes above the person's pain and circumstances and keep our eyes focused upon the LORD. Jesus said He only did what He saw the Father doing. He was not first and foremost moved by the requests of man, but by the Father's purposes. Pray for discernment that will discriminate between good and evil, recognizing that this is from God or from the enemy. James 1:5; John 5:19,30; 2 Chron. 7:14; Jer. 9:24; 1 Cor. 2:9-14; Phil. 3:10 (Amp)
- Pray for a revelation of God's great love

- and the ability to trust in the perfection of His character to bring them good. This prepares our hearts to receive from His hand and trust Him that whatever He does His purposes are for our good. Ps. 145:17; Romans 8:28, 29; Prov. 16:3
- We need to pray, as Moses prayed, “Lord, teach me your ways, so that I can know You.” Ex. 33:13; Luke 24:45 The source of our teaching on God’s ways in healing should always be from the Word of God. He has given His Word to instruct and equip. There is no one person or ministry that has the full truth. 2 Timothy 3:16,17; John 14:6.
- Pray that God will receive maximum glory in His name for these circumstances. In all that we do, His glory is to be the highest purpose! Isa. 43:7; 1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Cor. 10:31; John 17:10,22-24; Ps. 73:24-26; Rom. 11:36.
- Ask the LORD to search your heart and show you if there is any unconfessed sin that is contributing to the physical condition. James 5:16 tells us, “Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.” James 5:16 (NASB77) Watchman Nee said, “...the first action one should take when ill is not to scurry around in search of healing and the means of healing. ...he should place himself completely in God’s light for examination, having an honest desire to learn if he is being chastened because of some lack. He should judge himself. Thus, the Holy Spirit shall point out to him where he has failed. Whatever he is shown, it must be immediately confessed and forsaken.”¹ The Word makes it clear that a person’s spiritual condition is a higher priority than their physical needs. This is not to say that physical needs are unimportant, but His eternal purposes are always the priority. Lam. 3:33; Matt. 5:30; Matt. 18:8; Mark 9:43,45; James
- Ask the LORD to show what He is trying to teach during this trial. We do not want this situation to go away until He has achieved His purpose. Pray that He won’t heal us until we have learned everything He wants to teach us. He is always looking at the eternal outcomes as well as our immediate needs. The definition of salvation includes healing of mind, body and spirit as well as granting us eternal life.²
- “Dear God, in the Name of the LORD Jesus, I bring _____ to You. I ask that You would meet the deepest need of her mind, body, soul and spirit as You see it to be. Thank You that You will. In Jesus Name, Amen.”³
- Pray for an obedient heart to respond to what He shows you. “Tell me the next thing that I am to do, thank You that You will, in Your way and in Your time.”⁴ “God often required an act of obedience on the part of the one He is healing. ⁵Ps. 32:8; Micah 7:7; Hab. 2:1; John 14:15
- While you wait upon the LORD, realize the enemy wants you to become discouraged and destroy your faith. The battle is to keep your focus on the LORD and continue to trust in Him. Our faith is to be solidly in the LORD whether He answers our prayers or not. Proverbs 13:12 says that hope deferred makes the heart sick, so guard your heart against hopeless and despair. God has great

¹ Watchman Nee, “The Spiritual Man” Vol. 3, 1968

² Joy Dawson believes that these two questions are more important than even being actually healed. “Some of the Ways of God in Healing” by Joy Dawson, 1991

³ Joy Dawson, *ibid*

⁴ Joy Dawson, *ibid*

⁵ Joy Dawson, *ibid*

blessings for those who hold fast to Him, thank and praise Him, especially when their prayers do not appear to be answered. These are times when we can show Him that our love is for Him alone, and not just for His answers to prayer. When we stand in faith in these times, we purchase gold refined in the fire, that lasts for all of eternity. Job 19:25; Ps. 27:13-14; Rev. 3:18; Ps. 42, 43; Ps. 142. While we wait, we need to have our ears tune to what He is speaking, so spend time meditating on His Word and allow His Word to impart to us a greater knowledge of our LORD and His ways. Rom. 10:17; Ps. 1:3; Ps. 107:20; 1 Sam. 30:1-6

**“But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness
Arise, with healing on His wings.” Mal. 4:2**