

HEALING THE SICK

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1 uncertainty

MY EYES ARE FIXED ON
JESUS



HEALING?

1 uncertainty

At our offices in Albuquerque, we often receive phone calls and emails asking the Impact Nations staff to pray for healing, which we happily do. But there is a recurring theme to these requests. What we are often asked is, “What am I doing wrong that is blocking my healing?” My answer: Probably nothing.

While things like unforgiveness and bitterness can block God’s work in our lives, the very fact that the question is being asked seems to indicate a reasonable level of self-examination (and if need be, repentance) has already taken place. So, why aren’t these folks being healed?

There are many, many possible answers, but here are a few:

First of all, we are in a battle all the time. God loves to heal; the enemy hates that truth and tries to block healing. This is part of the bigger mystery of free will in the cosmos; spiritually, we are in a universe at war. In Mark 9, Jesus told the perplexed disciples who had tried to set a young man free but failed, that some battles are harder than others. (“This type only comes out by prayer.”)

1 uncertainty

Secondly, we live in a world of uncertainty and paradox. (Isn't the Cross itself a paradox?) It is painful for us to live with this reality. That is why the hardest thing about praying for the sick (and why we so often don't do so) is not lack of faith, but the pain of praying and not seeing the person healed.

I once watched four blind people instantly healed in Zambia. When the fifth person (who was by then full of faith and anticipation) was prayed for, nothing happened. I have prayed for strangers who were instantly and totally healed of cancer and I have prayed for beloved friends and co-workers who were not, and then passed away. Paradox.

However, my eyes are fixed on Jesus, who loves to heal and who is always good. I decided this many years ago and the fruit has been countless thousands of healings, including amazing miracles. I see many more healed than not. Again and again, I experience the wonder and joy of watching Him instantly change the possibilities for men, women and children. And sometimes I feel the confusion and disappointment of not seeing Him heal. I long ago learned that that is the price of praying for the sick.

1 uncertainty

So my encouragement to all who are still suffering with sickness or pain is this: Keep your eyes, your thoughts, your heart focused on Jesus. Take your eyes off your situation and look at Him. No matter what, He is always good.

Don't worry about not having enough faith (after all, the paralytic at the pool had no faith whatsoever yet Jesus healed him). Don't fall into despair; instead thank Him—again and again until it rises up authentically from deep within your spirit.

Years ago, I prayed for one of my sons every night for over a year. Every night. For over a year. Not once did I see an improvement in his condition. Then one evening, I prayed just like every other night; however, this time, when I finished praying, the Lord said to me, "It's done." The next morning when I went into his room, he was totally healed and has remained so all of these years. Why didn't Jesus heal him the first night? I don't know. But He knows. And He is always good.

2 beauty

MOVING IN HIS EASY RHYTHMS OF

GRACE



HEALING?

2 beauty

A predominant theme for preaching and writing that the Lord has put on my heart over the past few years is how beautiful the Gospel really is. We don't need to convince people about anything; just let them see, like King David, "the beauty of the Lord." (Ps 27:4) Everyone was created for beauty, and Jesus is beauty. As Dostoevesky wrote, "Beauty will save the world." Of this, I am convinced.

Healing is largely about beauty and grace. Driving to work this morning, I was thinking about some of the wonderful healings I have witnessed over the years. I remember the little boy (about five years old) who came running up to me at an outdoor meeting in central India. The look of wonder on his face as he kept opening and closing a hand that, moments earlier had been withered, was beautiful. There is no other word for it.

2 beauty

I can still see the blind girl in Nicaragua who whose eyes were instantly healed. Her smile was radiant while her mother wept with joy. Beautiful. There was the old lady in Korea who had been bent completely over for many years. I remember her laughing, shouting and singing as she danced and jumped around the building. "Behold the beauty of the Lord".

Beauty and grace always go together. I have discovered that the Lord loves to heal. (In fact, He told me that once in the midst of a miracle.) More times than I can count, people have asked me about my methodology of healing. I understand their questions. After all, they want to pray effectively; they want to see people healed.

There are a few specific things that I've learned over the years, but those are not the things that really matter. More than anything, healing is simply relaxing in the movement of God. Relaxing. Resting. Being comfortable.

2 beauty

We're not trying to get it right, to pray with the correct technique or even theology; instead, we are learning to recognize His beauty and grace at work. When we begin to move in His easy rhythms of grace, our tendency to take on responsibility and pressure for results evaporates.

Jesus told us that if we abide (remain, stay, dwell, be present) in Him, we will bear much fruit. In my earlier days, I focused on the last half of that promise. More than anything, I wanted to be fruitful in healing.

Eventually, my attention shifted to just being present with Him. To my surprise, praying for the sick became, perhaps more than nearly anything, a time of deep intimacy. Without trying, I find myself in a place of great rest and closeness with Jesus. Just me, the person I am praying for, and Jesus all together. There is only one word for this: beauty.

3 authority


UNSHAKEABLE CONFIDENCE IN HIS

SPiRiT



HEALING?

3 authority




Earlier, I wrote that to enter into healing ministry, we must be willing to embrace paradox. This reflects two truths: God is filled with mystery, and we are in a constant battle with an enemy who opposes us. Our response in the midst of sickness or pain is to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus.

Having said that, I want to be clear: I not only believe that Jesus heals, but I also experience His healing power and mercy being released all the time. There are many, many things to be written about healing; what is on my heart and mind today is the authority that Christ has given to us.

Jesus said in Mark 4:25, “to the one who has, even more shall be given.” This applies directly to the issue of our authority to heal. The more we step out in faith, believing that Christ has given us authority, the more it increases.

3 authority




Authority is not about exercising power or control. True spiritual authority comes from one place: intimacy with the Triune God. The Father gives authority to sons and daughters. Being a child of God (Jn 1:12) is not a position or title, it is our deepest identity and it comes from relationship. Not anything theoretical or religious, but relationship that is deeply experiential.

Jesus' commissioning for ministry took place at His baptism. As He came up from the water, the Father said, "You are My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." (Mk 1:11) With these words, the Father confirmed Jesus' relational authority:

- "You belong to Me" established identity
- "I love You", generated a deep security
- "I am well pleased with You" settled an unshakeable confidence in His spirit.


3 authority



Spiritual authority has been described as confidence without arrogance; humility without apology. I know, deep down, that I have authority. When I pray for the sick, I fully expect them to be healed and I have no doubts about my authority and commission.

How has this happened? It has been a slow and progressive journey of over 40 years; as I have continued to step out and pray for the sick, I have come to experientially know that I really do have authority. But beyond that, even more foundationally, this continues to be a journey of love. As day by day with Jesus, He speaks the belonging, love and confidence He into my spirit, I go out into my world, knowing that I am in Him and He is in me (Jn 14:20).

3 authority



When He walks with me, He always moves in the direction of restoration, compassion, love and forgiveness. This is why the writer to the Hebrews says, "Let your hearts be established by grace." (Heb 13:9)

At the deepest level, this kind of intimacy is what Jesus means when He invites us to pray in His Name. Intimacy is why His name is our great weapon. More about this next week.

"But if you make yourselves at home with me and my words are at home in you, you can be sure that whatever you ask will be listened to and acted upon." (Jn 15:7 MSG)

4 assurance

INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS AND HIS

NAME

HEALING?

4 assurance

Among the numerous principles connected with our spiritual authority in healing, perhaps none is more important than the Name of Jesus. The disciples prayed in the Name; the early church recognized the all-encompassing power and authority of the Name; Paul instructed the church to “do everything in the Name of the Lord Jesus” (Col 3:17).

On His final night with His disciples Jesus spoke to them deeply from His heart in what we call the Farewell Discourse (Jn 14-16). Six times Jesus repeats “in My name” (Jn 14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23,24,26). He knew how vital it is that we truly believe His Name is the power and the authority that makes every knee bow.

His name changes everything; it is the name of the King and it is ours, as His subjects, to use. His name reflects His identity as the second person of the Triune God and His work: the Kingdom of God. To pray in His name is to pray in union with Him.

4 assurance

Once again, this takes us back to our place of relationship with Him. As I have already stated, true authority flows from intimacy with Jesus. The key to power in intercession, healing and deliverance is time spent with Him.

To pray in His name is to pray His purposes and desires that are revealed to us through our intimate bond with Him. As we grow in hearing Christ, we do so with the confident assurance that He gives the right to use His name to every follower; we learn to effectively exercise that right through time with Him.

Why do we have this privilege? First of all, it is the birthright of everyone born into God's family. In a sense, Jesus is our family name. It is our spiritual identity. Secondly, our authority is established at our water baptism. At the day of Pentecost, Peter said told the crowd, "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." (Acts 2:38) Paul told the Roman church, "all of us have been baptized into Christ Jesus" (Ro 6:3).

4 assurance

Increasingly over my years of ministry, I have come to recognize the great spiritual importance of water baptism. It is why I encourage every new believer to be baptized as soon as possible. When we are baptized we “put on the name of Jesus” (Ro 13:14). This is like a wife taking her husband’s name; she shares in his possessions and privileges.

At baptism, we enter into union with the Trinity. Baptized into the Father, He gives us the place of His child with all the inheritance and privileges of the family. Baptized into the Holy Spirit, we enter into union with Him as representatives of God’s power and glory upon the earth. (And healing is certainly a clear expression of His power and glory.) All the Holy Spirit has, we are baptized into. When we are baptized into the name of Jesus, all that His name stands for in heaven becomes ours to access. All the victories that He won at the Cross become ours, too.

4 assurance

Through our baptism, the rights of Jesus are now ours. (“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Gal 3:27) This is a great part of our inheritance as His children. Therefore, to use His name does not require exercising any great or special faith. It is already ours through our baptism and His victory on the Cross. This is why John writes: “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God”.

As we stand before someone needing God’s healing touch, we can do so knowing that we carry the true spiritual authority that comes from intimate knowledge of Jesus and His name, from our identity and inheritance established at our baptism, and the incomparable victory that Christ won over sin, sickness and death at the cross.

Blessed assurance.

5 all by itself

THE GOSPEL CARRIES ITS OWN

POWER

HEALING?

5 all by itself

In the second chapter, I wrote about the beauty of the Gospel. Everyone is made for beauty; our part is to simply reflect and move in the beauty of the Lord as we pray for the sick and hurting.

Healing ministry isn't something specialized, meant for those who are particularly anointed; healing the sick is part of every believer's inheritance. As we step into this inheritance, I have found that it is helpful to have a few truths established in our hearts and minds.

One of these truths is that the Gospel is not only beautiful; it is powerful. Paul affirmed this in his letter to the Roman church: "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation" (Ro 1:16). The Gospel carries its own power.

5 all by itself

When we release the Gospel, the results do not depend upon our level of faith, how much time we have spent in prayer or the scriptures lately, or anything else that the enemy whispers in order to dissuade us from stepping out to pray for the sick when the opportunity presents itself. The power is in the Gospel itself. Paul knew this and that is why he wrote, “I am not ashamed”.

Just how powerful is the Gospel? The proclamation and demonstration of the Kingdom of God is so powerful that, like an ambassador delivering a message to a foreign government, the message itself does the work. The authority is in the message itself. This truth has set me free from any hesitation or vague feelings of being unworthy or unprepared. It has also freed me to invite everyone to pray for the sick in the authority of Jesus’ name.

5 all by itself

Over the years I have seen Muslim translators, non-Christians, an avowed atheist, and a Hindu friend—all heal the sick and injured by praying in the name of Jesus, even when they were simply doing it because I needed and asked them to do so. On the occasions when unbelievers have joined us on a Journey of Compassion (usually because they want to engage in humanitarian activities), I have seen them used by the Lord as much as the Christian team members.

Mark chapter four is full of illumination about the nature of the Kingdom of God; a close reading will reveal a lot of treasure: “This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain” (Mk 4:26-28).

5 all by itself

The Kingdom is supernatural, operating by the principles of an unlimited and eternal Heaven. When the Kingdom breaks in, it surprises us. One of the most important lessons I have learned over the years is the “all by itself” principle. Recognizing this has caused me to live with more spiritual awareness and expectation.

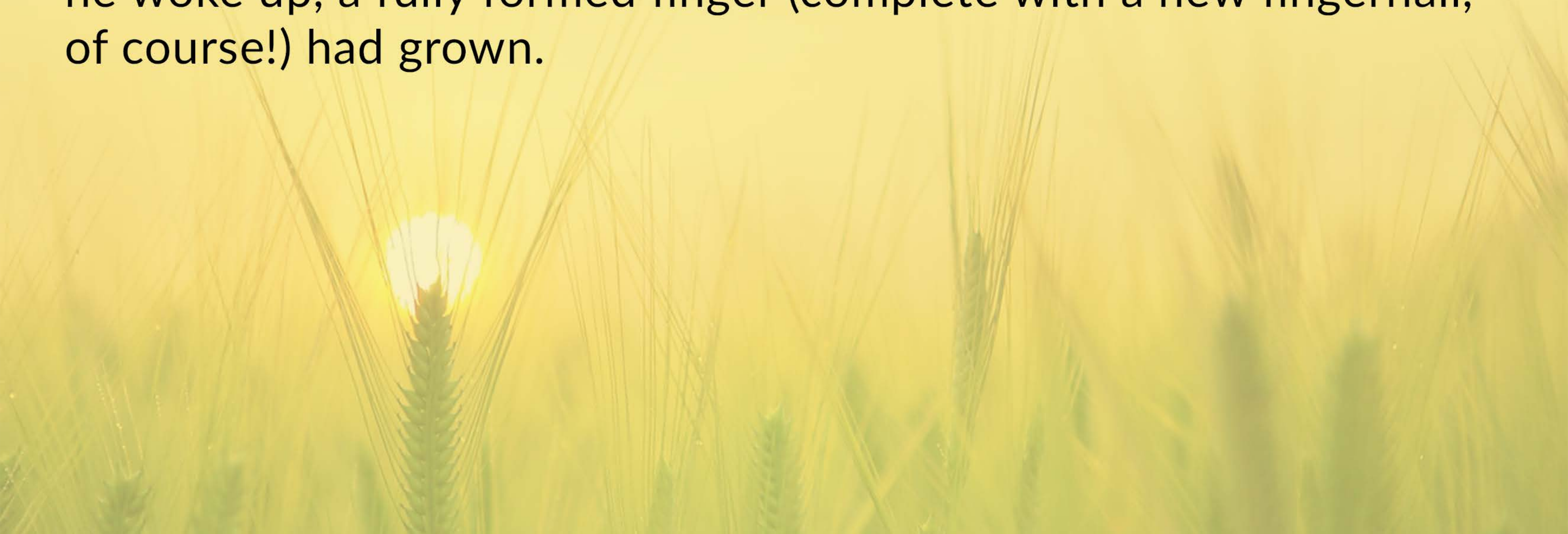
This has had a direct impact on how I approach praying for the sick. In this short parable, we see two truths about how the Kingdom works: The farmer had to take the initiative to scatter the seed. Kingdom activity is a partnership between us and the Lord; our part is to step out, to take action.

Secondly, whether the farmer sees anything happening or not, he goes on with his life, without anxiety, knowing that when Kingdom seed is scattered, it will do its work.

5 all by itself

It is vital to remember this when we don't seem to see immediate results. Many times I have prayed healing for people when, seemingly, nothing happened, only to find out later that over the following hours or even days, they received a full healing.

Just last week I saw a Facebook post from a friend that illustrated this. Her son was at camp, and one night the boys in the cabin prayed for one of the campers who, sometime before, had lost part of a finger. Nothing seemed to happen at the time, but when he woke up, a fully formed finger (complete with a new fingernail, of course!) had grown.



5 all by itself

So the next time you are presented with the opportunity to pray healing for someone, remember:

- The Gospel carries its own power, regardless of how confident we are feeling.
- Our assignment is to scatter the seed of the Kingdom.
- The seed produces a crop “all by itself.”

“So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded.”
(Heb 10:35)



6 final thoughts

RELEASE THE REALITY OF THE
KINGDOM



HEALING?

6 final thoughts

I hope that you have found this short e-book to be helpful. It is, of course, only a brief overview of a few ideas and principles about healing that I have found helpful over the years.

If you would like to go much further on this healing journey, I encourage you to purchase *When Everything Changes*. In that book I develop not only healing, but how to release the reality of the Kingdom of God in and through your life.

You may also want to get my video series, *Doing the Gospel* which contains about five hours of specific instruction on healing and the Kingdom and an accompanying instruction book.

God bless you on your journey.

Steve



6 final thoughts

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