

Prayer Ministry

Small Group Study Guide

Lesson 11. Physical Healing

How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. - Acts 10:38

I love to see physical healing. It is obvious, measurable, and remarkable. No wonder Jesus went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed. He was working signs and wonders for the glory of God!

Instruction

People flocked to Jesus everywhere He went because of signs and wonders, including physical healing. He used their curiosity and intrigue as an opening to teach about the plan of salvation and the way to be reconciled to God. The physical healing was never His only goal but served as a starting point for complete healing and reconciliation with God.

The Will of God

Jesus promised that His followers would do the signs and wonders that He did, and even greater works (John 14:12). He proclaimed that signs and wonders would accompany believers (Mark 16:17). He explained that the power to do these works would come through the Holy Spirit. When we witness blind people given sight, lame people walking, paralyzed people moving, sick people getting better, and the dead being raised, these are signs that His authority over sickness and disease has been transferred to us through Pentecost. We can expect God to heal in answer to our prayers because we believe and follow Him.

Wholeness

Expect physical healing to accompany spiritual and emotional healing because God brings wholeness to the person in each realm. The order in which healing manifests is up to God. Jesus demonstrated this in His ministry when He healed some in the spiritual realm first and others in the physical.

For example, of the ten lepers that were healed, only the Samaritan leper returned to thank Jesus.

When He saw them He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving Him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. - Luke 17:14-16

This leper was first healed physically, then emotionally and spiritually. He was physically healed as he went and the manifestation came with that obedient step of faith. Then he was emotionally healed as manifested by praising God with a loud voice. Finally, He was reconciled to God and spiritually healed as demonstrated by his humble act of worship and thanksgiving.

In this example the recorded sequence happens so quickly the steps of progression are hard to distinguish. I exaggerated the sequence in my paraphrase to help our Western mindset follow the steps. Hebrew culture, however, is more comfortable with the "prophetic tense" in

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which the “truth” is more important than the “method.” In other words, reporting “what happened” is more important than “how it happened.”

Whether healing manifests quickly or slowly between the realms, we know by faith that it is as good as done in a prophetic sense. When the presenting symptom is physical, that is a good place to start the healing process, but if healing begins in the spiritual or emotional realms we can expect wholeness to manifest in the physical as well.

The Role of Faith

And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease." - Mark 5:34

It takes the same faith to be saved as it does to be healed. In the incident of the woman being healed by touching His robe, Jesus told her that her faith had saved her. When He said “go in peace” it means that she had been given the gift of shalom in all its fullness. Then He told her to be healed of her disease as well. She was made whole spiritually (saved), physically (healed), and emotionally (peace), all because of her faith in Jesus.

It is important to recognize that the object of faith provides the power of faith.

For instance, supernatural results happen when the object of your faith is God, a supernatural being. Faith is to know and agree that He is, and that He loves. We put our trust in Him, and nothing else.

On the other hand, there is some power in positive thinking. We are created in God’s image, after all. Positive thinking is to have faith in faith. It is to believe that control over our environment can be accomplished through that faith. This has been demonstrated consistently over the years. People are made well by a positive mental attitude.

The proponents of this faith in faith, such as new age believers, mystics, and others, have adopted this truth, but they did not create it. God has promoted this way of thinking for thousands of years, as recorded in the Scriptures like Philippians 4:8 and Psalm 138. The power of this kind of faith is based on the character of God being reflected in the person. It has some power.

There are some whose object of faith is an outcome. That means they believe in the manifestation of the healing, and expect their unshakable faith to be the agent through which it happens. Examples of these are faith healers and religious practitioners who claim you can be healed by faith rather than through it.

The problem with this line of thought is that it is limited to the power of wishful thinking. When a person attempts to influence their circumstances in this way it usually leads to frustration and a feeling of shame or guilt.

That is not the way we are saved by faith. We are saved and healed because we believe in the true God and in Jesus Christ whom He sent as a sacrifice for our sin (John 17:3). That is why it is more accurate to say we are saved by God through faith. The woman Jesus healed from bleeding was healed because of her faith by the power of God.

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. - Mark 11:24

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This verse is a promise that connects believing with receiving. Jesus is not equating believing with having your own opinion or conviction. Instead, He is saying that your prayer of faith in His Word will certainly come true.

We can pray with great confidence when we know we are asking according to His will. How do we know His will? By testing and proving it (Romans 12:2). My suggestion is to ask and listen, revising your request based on the answers, until your will aligns with His. This is relational prayer.

We can pray with great confidence when we know He has already promised us something. How do we know if He has made us a personal promise? By paying attention to the things He promises, and allowing the Holy Spirit to reveal the nature and specifics to you. For instance, if I find a promise God made to someone in the Bible, I will ask Him if that promise applies to me. When He says it is so, I pray in great faith.

We can pray with great confidence when He asks us to do so. This usually happens when we spend time in listening prayer. God does not interrupt our busy day or blurt out a request when our minds are otherwise occupied. But when we are listening and open to His ideas, that is when He may suggest we ask Him for something. When God makes that kind offer we can believe that we have received it.

Faith Challenge

Faith must be tested, because it can only become your intimate possession through conflict. What is challenging your faith right now? The test will either prove your faith right, or it will kill it. - My Utmost for His Highest (August 29).

Faith comes from God. Man cannot create it by himself, but he can choose to receive or reject it. Jesus described it as a mustard seed. It is a small gift, but when it is planted it can grow into something much more impressive. Faith must be tested and proven through conflict or it will never germinate.

Faith is the conviction of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). If you can reason a matter out, it does not take faith. If you can accept something by common sense it is not faith. If you can see or perceive something it is not faith.

Physical healing often requires a faith challenge. Before evidence of the miracle is given, a step of faith is needed. For instance, the phrase “getting your feet wet” is a reference to the Levites that stepped into the flooded Jordan River with the ark of the covenant so the Israelites could cross on dry ground. What a step of faith!

Jesus used many faith challenges for those He healed. The lepers had to show themselves to the priests. The paralytic had to pick up his bed. The blind man had to wash his eyes in the pool by the temple. The woman touched the tassels of His robe.

What is your faith challenge? Listen and consider what God has asked you to do to activate your faith and receive your healing.

The Role of the Word

Then He said to me, "Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. - Ezekiel 37:4

The account of Ezekiel and the challenge of the dry bones in the valley is a fascinating picture of physical healing. You may recall that God brought him to the valley to look at a

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field of dry bones. Then God asked if they could live. Ezekiel replied that only God could know the answer to that question.

Notice that God's response was to invite Ezekiel to prophesy over those bones. He asked him to speak life to them, and the bones rattled together! Then God invited Ezekiel to prophesy to the wind that the bones could have breath, and they came alive!

The lesson I would like to point out here is the power of the spoken word. God could have snapped His fingers, or clapped His hands, or spoken the words Himself. But He invited Ezekiel to participate in the miracle. He used Ezekiel's voice to activate a supernatural miracle.

When you pray for physical healing, prophesy over the body. Speak life and order to the systems, organs, tissues, and cells. Use the words of the Lord to command the healing to take place. There is power in the spoken word.

Have you wondered how to speak to your own body? A great deal of research has been done about the benefits of this kind of communication. Bio-feedback and other awareness strategies have found a place in health care. Research shows that a person's expressed desire for healing has a powerful influence. Their studies are confirming what God has been doing all along!

Try activating your faith in the promises of God by prophesying over your body. Speak blessing and love and life. You will find that your physical body will respond to the word of the Lord in supernatural ways.

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Lesson 11: Physical Healing Exercise

Use the table below for a physical self-examination. In the first column note any issue or symptom God brings to your mind. Where do you experience pain, disease, discomfort, disability, or limitation?

Ask God to reveal the source or root of that pain, and enter the answer in the second column. The root may be physical, but could also be from the spiritual or emotional realms. Then ask for His remedy, and capture that in the third column. Often healing comes through an act of obedience. If God has given you instruction, make a note of the specific action you need to take.

Thank and praise Him for reconciliation.

Issue/Symptom	Root Cause	God's Remedy	Act of Obedience

Allow time for testimonies and praise reports for anyone that received physical healing that manifested during this prayer time. Then make time for testimonies from anyone that received assurance of healing and is awaiting its completion.

Sharing: Physical Healing

Discuss these points and questions in your small group.

- Physical healing was never Jesus' ultimate goal, but served as a starting point for complete healing.
- What has been your experience with faith healing, whether live or on television?
- Why do you think some are uncomfortable with talk about physical healing?
- How can you promote physical healing without placing judgment on others?
- What were the benefits of signs and wonders done by the disciples in the towns to which Jesus would go?
- How does that pattern affect your thinking about evangelism and the ministry or reconciliation?
- What kind of faith do you have?
- How can you encourage someone trapped in unbelief?

Caring: Physical Healing

Read James 5:13-16 and ask the Lord how you should respond to what He is saying.