

"I did not come with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:1-2).

God Heals Today, His Way

Because of charlatans and hype artists who preach healing in the Name of Jesus Christ, like Benny Hinn, Oral Roberts, Peter Popoff, and Reinhard Bonnke, for examples (and there are many, many more), I must make something as clear as I can. While I know divine healing is as relevant today as it ever was, and have witnessed and received many miraculous healings both for myself and others, I must sound the warning and say that one errs in going to these televangelists and popular "healers" for satisfaction. God is not with them. I repeat: God is not with them. He is sorely vexed with these blasphemous copies of Balaam and children of Nimrod. They are antiChrist, some of them deliberately, wittingly so, even proven so, while others sincerely think to be serving God but are deceived.

Of the latter, the Lord has said:

"Many will say to Me in that day, Lord! Lord! Did we not prophesy in Your Name, and through Your Name throw out demons, and through Your Name do many wonderful works? And then I will say to them I never knew you! Depart from Me, those working lawlessness!" (Matthew 7:22-23)

All healing is available from God to those of true faith.

Does God heal people of physical, as well as other ailments today? Many do not believe so. While most do not believe God heals at all, some believe or are willing to consider that He gives spiritual, or inner, healings, and that is all. The purpose of this writing is to notify all who are given to hear and to believe, that all healing, physical, mental, and spiritual, is indeed available from God, in due time, to all those of true faith and obedience to Him. The record of God is clear:

"He said, 'If you will listen carefully to the LORD your God and do what He considers right, if you pay attention to His commands and obey all His laws, I will never make you suffer any of the diseases I made the Egyptians suffer, because I am the LORD, Who heals you'" (Exodus 15:26 GW).

Here is another eternally sure promise of God for those that are His:

"If My people, who are called by My name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from Heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Let me ask one simple question of any that profess to believe: If you were to meet the conditions required as expressed in that Scripture, will God do or will He not

do what He promised? If not, you ought to find yourself another God, One Who speaks the truth and keeps His promises. If He is not including or speaking of physical healing, what then is He talking about? Can you say?

But I know, by experience, that the One speaking here is the Lord God and that He can be fully trusted to keep His end of the bargain. He is faithful. If you are not experiencing His promise, you need to seriously consider that there is something wrong at your end in that you are not meeting those conditions He requires. It is that simple. Nobody and nothing else is to blame.

Faith and obedience are the keys to the blessing of God.

The Lord once told me, in 1976, that He was hurting because His people were hurting. They were hurting, He said, because they were not obeying Him for lack of knowledge. Faith and obedience are the keys or key (they are one) to the blessing of God in every aspect of life. It then follows, as the Scriptures do bear out, that almost all illness is due to lack of faith and obedience.

Those who do not believe argue that the words from Exodus were meant for ancient Israel only. Can they argue so with justification? Let us see what the apostle Paul had to say when comparing (or contrasting) the Law to what followed the Law:

2 Corinthians 3:7-12 EMTV

(7) Now if the ministry of death, having been engraved in letters on stones, came to be with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently into the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, the glory which was passing away,

(8) how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious?

(9) For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory.

(10) For even that which has been glorified has not been glorified in this respect, because of the surpassing glory.

(11) For if that which passes away was glorious, then that which remains is much more glorious.

(12) Therefore, having such hope, we use great boldness of speech....

Unbelieving "believers" are saying, *in essence*, that the more glory we have, the less healing. They say that God promised health to those under the Law but as for those who have the Spirit, they must be prepared to be sick or even die of cancer or heart disease. While Christ was not within, there was healing but now that God Himself, the Prince of Life and Health, lives within, there is sickness and death without recourse. Does that make sense? Would it not be better for some if Christ had not come, seeing He did away with health? Were not the Hebrews better off under Moses, at least in this respect, if we are going to believe the reasoning of those who deny God's will to heal and to give us health today?

There is no question that God's will is that we have wellbeing.

Many read the Psalms and look to them for comfort and inspiration, whether they think God's healing is only for the old days or not. So if they are worthy of reading for comfort, why not believe them? Here is a declaration for all times:

"By David. Praise the LORD, my soul! Praise His holy Name, all that is within me. Praise the LORD, my soul, and never forget all the good He has done: He is the One Who forgives all your sins, the One Who heals *all* your diseases, the One Who rescues your life from the pit, the One Who crowns you with mercy and compassion" (Psalms 103:1-4 GW).

There is no question that the New Testament as well as the Old declares the sure healing of God. There is no question that God's will is that we have well-being. Jesus said:

"The thief comes only to take the sheep and to put them to death: he comes for their destruction: I have come so that they may have life and have it in greater measure" (John 10:10 BBE).

"Beloved, in regard to all things I pray that you prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers" (3 John 1:2).

Shall we not consider, therefore, that when we get cancer or some horrible malady, that it is not the will of God, but the doing of the destroyer, even as Jesus said? Why are we so quick to make a liar of Jesus Christ and accept the malignant tyranny of the destroyer, believing and honoring him, as is due only to the Lord? What fools we can be! Unbelief is unquestionably the stuff of fools, and for or with that unbelief, we pay dearly!

What good is it if we preach Christ, yet fall short of life?

Has Jesus Christ changed in His mind, His will, or His ways? Here is what the Hebrews writer has to say:

"Jesus Christ never changes! He is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8 CEV).

In the New Testament, the Hebrews writer simply repeats that which is declared in the Old Testament:

"I, the LORD, never change. That is why you descendants of Jacob haven't been destroyed yet" (Malachi 3:6 GW).

What good is it if we preach Jesus Christ to others, yet by example represent something falling so short of the abundant life He came to give? Are we not thus found to be fools, if not hypocrites and liars? Of course, we are! Why make excuses? Why rationalize? Why not admit our unbelief? Why not admit that we are calling Jesus Christ a liar, and the devil, the inevitable victor?

Perhaps it is only certain diseases He covers and not others? Let us see:

"Who forgives all your iniquities; Who heals *all* your diseases" (Psalms 103:3).

What are the keys to healing? Here is what Jesus says:

"Then He touched their eyes, saying, According to your faith let it be to you" (Matthew 9:29).

"Jesus said to him, If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes" (Mark 9:23).

Why do we not receive? Here is what James, who healed many, says:

"But let him ask *in faith*, doubting nothing. For he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed. For do not let that man think that he shall receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, not dependable in all his ways" (James 1:6-8).

Would Jesus give His disciples to heal if it was not His will to heal?

Jesus spoke these words concerning healing and unbelief:

"But I tell you truly, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine all over the land; but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, in the region of Sidon, to a widow woman. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian" (Luke 4:25-27 EMTV).

Also this is recorded:

"And He did not do many miracles there **because of their unbelief**" (Matthew 13:58 EMTV).

Jesus said this:

"Therefore I say to you, All things, **whatever** you ask, praying, **believe that you shall receive them**, and it will be to you" (Mark 11:24).

Faith is the key. The apostle John, who healed many, says this:

"And this is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we **have** the petitions that we desired of Him" (1 John 5:14-15).

The question arises: Is it God's will that we receive healing? I reply with a question: Would Jesus give His disciples and believers the power to heal if it was not His will that people be healed? Why bother? But here is what He promised to all who believe:

"And these signs shall accompany **those who have believed**: In My name they shall cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall pick up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it shall by no means hurt them; **they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall be well**" (Mark 16:17-18 EMTV).

We need to obey His commandments.

Is healing for today? Many argue that it was only for the early days. Yet these same people declare that they only believe what the Bible has to say, nothing more. Where then, I ask, do they find in the Bible that healing was only for the early days?

Did Jesus say, "These signs shall accompany **those who have believed in the early days**," or, "These signs shall accompany **those who have believed only until the Bible is complete**"? Did He make qualifications? Or do men, out of unbelief and denial of the Lord, Who heals their diseases, make those qualifications?

To answer that question, if you find no evidence that Jesus made those qualifications, then men have made them. If so, who will you believe? Will you believe men's lies, and die, or will you believe God's Word, His Truth, and live?

If earthly physicians, being evil, try to heal their patients that come to them, often succeeding, how much more will the Heavenly Father heal those who come to Him? Shall you believe sick patients who do not rely on the Great Physician or will you believe the Great Physician, Who stands desirous and ready to heal the sick?

Jesus said:

"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father in Heaven give good things to those who ask Him? Therefore all things, whatever you desire that men should do to you, do even so to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:11-12).

Why should we not believe? Why do we not believe? I will tell you why. It is because of sin. After His question, Jesus gives the answer. Do unto others as we would have them do unto us. This includes God, above all. We need to obey His commandments, if we expect Him to grant us our requests. Jesus said this:

"And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things which please Him" (John 8:29).

We must confess all; sins and false gods block the way.

Confession of Sin

It is also written:

"But we know that God does not hear sinners, but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him" (John 9:31).

We must come clean with God, confessing all. Sins and false gods block the way to His favor. Truly, they bring His wrath. Do you know what is your sin or idol? While some know, many do not. I have had gods and sins in my life of which I was not aware. Not knowing our sin does not excuse us. Sin is still sin and cannot go unaddressed. What, then, do we do if we do not know our sin? We must ask God to reveal our sin to us:

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if any wicked way is in me; and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalms 139:23-24).

"You have set our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of Your face" (Psalms 90:8).

"If we claim that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we claim that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us" (1 John 1:8-10 EMTV).

Now consider another promise Jesus made:

"He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me. And he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will reveal Myself to him" (John 14:21).

Shall He leave one who loves and obeys Him, and to whom He reveals Himself, languishing in illness or even suffering unto death by illness? Only unbelief will think so. How unbelief defames God's character! Is He faithful to His Word or is He not?

Again, Jesus said:

"A thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy. But I came so that **My sheep will have life and so that they will have everything they need**" (John 10:10 GW).

Faith is the knowledge of God and His ways,
friendship with God.

Why are you *not* asking? James says:

"You desire, and do not have. You murder, and are jealous, and cannot obtain. You fight and war, yet you have not because you ask not" (James 4:2).

Why *are* you asking?

"You ask and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it upon your lusts" (James 4:3).

Faith

But **what is faith?** Faith is not will power, as some think. Faith is not a matter of concentration. Faith is not a mental matter. Faith is a spiritual gift of God. Let me define faith: Faith is the knowledge of God and His ways. Faith is friendship with God. True faith translates into obedience. Obedience grows out of love for God. Jesus says, "He that has My commandments and keeps them, he it is that loves Me...."

Faith is trust in, dependence or reliance upon, God, in spite of external evidences to the contrary. Faith is also a profound sense of one's unworthiness. When the disciples came to Jesus asking Him to increase their faith, here is what He told them:

Luke 17:5-10 MKJV

(5) And the apostles said to the Lord, Give us more faith.

(6) And the Lord said, If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, you might say to this sycamine tree, Be rooted up and be planted in the sea! And it would obey you.

(7) But which of you who has a servant plowing or feeding will say to him immediately after he has come from the field, Come, recline?

(8) Will he not say to him, Prepare something so that I may eat, and gird yourself and serve me until I eat and drink. And afterward you shall eat and drink.

(9) Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not.

(10) **So likewise you, when you shall have done all the things commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants, for we have done what we ought to do.**

Faith is not a matter of religious doctrine or philosophy.

We all seek after God for things we want or need, but that is not faith. James says this:

"You believe God is one. You do well. Even the demons believe--and they shudder! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?" (James 2:19-20 EMTV)

So often one hears people say, "Oh, I believe in God...I am Catholic," or "I am of the Presbyterian faith," or "I go to church," or "I was baptized," or "I was raised United," or "Mom used to read the Bible to us," or "My father is a pastor," or "I worship God in nature," or "He is everywhere in everything," or "When it comes right down to it, everybody believes," or "I am an elder," or "I sing in the church choir," or "I serve on a church board," or many other such "credentials," to indicate they are Christians or believers in God.

Believing in God has nothing to do with religion, or denominational affiliation, or any kind of external works. Faith is not a matter of religious doctrine or philosophy or official position. The pope of Rome does not believe. Billy Graham does not believe. Almost all preachers, pastors, faith healers and evangelists do not believe. Surprised? It is true.

The Pharisees and other denominations of Jesus' day did not believe, did they? Neither did the Sanhedrin. Faith is an individual thing; it is a spiritual essence, a gift of God, granted to whom He pleases, wherein one trusts in the Living God, having had his or her heart opened to Him. Blessed is one who believes. Like someone said, "Going to church doesn't make you a believer any more than going to a garage makes you a car."

The healing of sinners by faith is not the same as the walk of faith.

In all of this it must be pointed out that there is a dimension of faith, which, though not the perfect will of God, is nevertheless effectual in the healings of many. This is the kind of faith exhibited by the nine out of ten lepers who were healed by Jesus, those who did not return to give glory to God. They had what they wanted, which they received by faith, but their faith was not perfected because they were not returned to the Giver and Source, not only to give thanks, but to cleave to, and live by, Him. That is the true end of the faith of Christ; reconciliation with, and return to, God.

The healing of sinners by faith, which healings Christ did not deny any that came to Him (He causes the sun to shine on the good and the wicked), is not the same as the walk of faith unto salvation. It may be a part of it, but one must go all the way, enduring to the end, as Jesus said, to be saved. That is the meaning of the following warning He gave a man healed by faith:

“Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, Behold, you are made whole. Sin no more lest a worse thing come to you” (John 5:14 MKJV).

Yes, it is good to be healed. But do not confuse the gift of healing from God with salvation, and with walking in His righteousness. The Lord warns us not to sin anymore. More importantly, if the underlying sin nature, which is responsible for sickness and death, is not addressed, then more undesirable outcomes will be reaped down the road, even in generations to come. The Lord has come to put away not only our sins, but the sin nature, once and for all, by putting away the man of sin that resides in each person. Then is the saying fulfilled:

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Revelation 21:4 KJV).

The natives began to experience healings almost immediately.

Deliverance from the sin nature is the intent and ministry of Christ, which can only be performed by Him in His ministers. Healings by faith, which are also administered by His servants, can come through those that are not His, too. There are some notable examples of healings that came as a result of people having faith to receive healing, regardless of the faith of those through whom the healings were enabled.

For example, in the sixteenth century, a Spaniard, Cabeza de Vaca, related how he and his companions were instrumental in the healings of many North American natives. The Spaniards, having suffered shipwreck, were few in number and at the mercy of the natives. When one group of natives sought them out for healing, for which they had no medical knowledge or faith, they saw themselves as having their backs to the wall with nowhere to go.

Not knowing what else to do, as stalwart Catholics, they made the sign of the cross over the natives and prayed as best they could, not expecting much but commending themselves to God. The natives began to experience healings almost immediately. The word spread. More natives came for healings and De Vaca even reports he prayed for one native that was raised from the dead.

It seems that there was simply great power in the belief the natives held that the Spaniards had the power of healing. This in turn inspired the belief of De Vaca in what God could and would do for them. As their faith was, so it was done to them.

This may explain the effectiveness of placebos. People believe whatever it might be will help, which mobilizes the spiritual, unseen powers within men, who are made in the image of God. There is power in belief, even in fallen man. As Paul said of God to the superstitious Athenians:

“For in Him we live and move and have our being, as also certain of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring” (Acts 17:28 MKJV).

The mother believed, and her faith made her daughter whole.

Another example of what appears to be a supernatural healing happened to Charles Templeton, a Canadian evangelist from the mid-twentieth century. Here is Templeton’s report of the incident, which he recorded years later, after admitting he never truly believed and was an agnostic. It is apparent in this case that the mother requesting prayer truly believed, and it was her faith that made her daughter whole:

“I had, when requested, prayed for the sick many times, never effectually. I never preached on faith healing, seldom referred to it and was publicly critical of evangelists who majored in it. I regarded it as peripheral and, in the hands of charlatans, dangerous.

Nevertheless, one Sunday afternoon, I went to one of those small boxlike frame houses common to Toronto's east end at the request of a woman who attended the church. Her infant daughter had been born deformed. The large muscle on the right side of the neck was attached to the left collar-bone, binding the baby's head to the left. As I understood it, there was some conjunction of the muscle and the jugular vein that made it impossible to correct the problem surgically. Once a week the woman took the infant to the Hospital For Sick Children for muscular rehabilitation. The baby's head was repeatedly twisted to the right, to stretch the muscle so that, in later years, she would be able more or less to face the front. The mother was required to repeat the therapy for ten minutes each day despite the baby's screams. Finding it unendurable she importuned me to come and pray that the infant be healed.

I went reluctantly, feeling like a mountebank. The baby was in the bedroom in its crib. I put some olive oil on my fingers, kneeled with the mother, put my hands on the infant and prayed. I had no expectation that the child would be healed. With the glib words on my tongue, I was thinking about the woman - about her pain, and about how disheartened she would be when the baby was unchanged and months of agonizing therapy lay ahead. At the close, we rose to our feet and returned to the living room. I was questing in my mind for sentiments with which to buoy up her courage and ease her disappointment. We sat for a few minutes, talking, I in a chair and she on the chesterfield opposite, I asked, "Wasn't the baby's head bound to the left?" The baby was looking to the right and then turned to face me. The woman fainted, and as she began to slide to the floor, I caught the baby and

placed it on the chesterfield. When the woman revived, she was near hysterics. I told her to report what had happened to the hospital.

Four years later, New World, a Canadian imitation of Life magazine, came to me looking for a story idea. They planned to do a feature in their Easter edition under the heading, "What My Faith Means To Me." I sent them to the woman and to the Sick Children's Hospital. They ran the story and a full-page picture of the mother and child, now a young girl and manifestly normal."

Receiving healing by faith is a blessing from Heaven, like the sun shining or rain falling on man. What is better yet is to receive Christ, and to walk in His perfect will, which includes health of body, soul and spirit.

When God alone matters, all will be yours.

The Secret

What about God's needs and feelings? What about *His* will? Solomon wrote, "The rich has many friends." God is rich and so He has many friends. They are almost invariably sycophantic, and a curious mixture of "fair weather/foul weather" friends. When things are going well (for them), they ignore God. When things get tough, they call on Him. There is rarely thought given to His cares.

People seem to think that because He is God, He needs no friends, but Abraham, the father of faith and of those who believe, was known as the friend of God. He believed. He had faith. He cared about God, by the grace of God.

Here is the secret to life and all things. Are you ready? This could be the most important thing I have ever said and the most important thing you have ever heard. Here it is:

In whatever dire or troubling circumstance we find ourselves, there is an issue. When once we are prepared to hear from God, know what is the issue, acknowledge it, face it, and commit to doing whatever it takes to resolve it in the way that is acceptable to God, with bridges burned behind us, that is, without any ulterior motive or occasion for withdrawing, we have crossed the "solution line."

The resignation includes anything and everything that God decides to do, even death if that must be. I am reminded of Kris Kristofferson's song, "Me and Bobby Magee," wherein are the words, "Freedom's just another word for nothing left to lose." True words.

When you come to the place where God (Jesus Christ) alone matters, when you seek Him for what *He* wants and not for what *you* want, all will be yours. "Not my will, but Yours be done." With those words, Jesus overcame death itself and all the powers of darkness. With those words, exercised to the fullest, all power and authority in Heaven and in earth was given Him. He became Lord of lords and King

of kings. Today, He reigns because He surrendered His will and embraced the Father's.

That is the secret to the Treasure House of God, wherein one finds his or her regenerate heart's desire and all things needful...guaranteed. You cannot do your own thing and expect God to honor you. He is not naive or foolish, but He cares enough to not let you get away with such an attitude.

If we harbor any hope in anybody or anything other than God, if we still hold out some dependence elsewhere, we will not receive our reward from God. He will allow us to exhaust all other avenues we perceive to be open to us before He answers. James says:

"Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, sinners; and purify your hearts, double-minded ones" (James 4:8).

God works not with independent ones, but with His Body.

There are those who think they have no need to be prayed for by someone else. "If I want something from God, I will get it myself." What does James have to say about this?

"Is any sick among you? 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 cure the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up. And if he has committed sins, it will be forgiven him. Confess faults to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous one avails much" (James 5:14-16).

Paul says that God works not with "lone rangers," the independent ones, but with and by His Body:

1 Corinthians 12:5-31

(5) And there are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.

(6) And there are differences of workings, but it is the same God working all things in all.

(7) But to each one is given the showing forth of the Spirit to our profit.

(8) For through the Spirit is given to one a word of wisdom; and to another a word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit;

(9) and to another faith by the same Spirit; and to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

(10) and to another workings of powers, to another prophecy; and to another discerning of spirits; and to another kinds of tongues; and to another the interpretation of tongues.

(11) But the one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing separately to each one as He desires.

(12) For as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ.

(13) For also by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free, even all were made to drink into one Spirit.

(14) For the body is not one member, but many.

(15) If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

(16) And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

(17) If all the body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If all hearing, where would be the smelling?

(18) But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body as it has pleased Him.

(19) And if they were all one member, where would be the body?

(20) But now indeed many are the members, yet only one body.

(21) And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

(22) But much rather the members of the body seeming to be weaker are necessary.

(23) And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we put more abundant honor around them. And our unrepresentable members have more abundant propriety.

(24) For our presentable members have no need, but God tempered the body together, giving more abundant honor to the member having need;

(25) that there not be division in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.

(26) And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is glorified, all the members rejoice with it.

(27) And you are the body of Christ, and members in part.

(28) And God set some in the church, firstly, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers, then works of power, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, kinds of languages.

(29) Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of power?

(30) Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak languages? Do all interpret?

(31) But zealously strive after the better gifts. And yet I show to you a more excellent way.

Pride stops one dead in his or her tracks.

Why do many not have their necessary healings? Here is God's answer for some:

"Therefore He says, God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6).

Pride stops one dead in his or her tracks. It is recorded that:

"Therefore pride enchains them; violence covers them like a robe" (Psalms 73:6).

The Scriptures say this:

"But we know that God does not hear sinners, but **if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him**" (John 9:31).

Where there is fear of God, there is no pride. Where there is pride, there is no fear of God. And where there is no fear of God, there is no obedience to God, nor does He hear the prayers of the disobedient. That is why many pray to Him for healing, and do not receive.

"You have rebuked the proud who are cursed, who go astray from Your Commandments" (Psalms 119:21).

Excuses and Justifications

Satan

It is common to hear people blaming Satan, evil spirits, and curses for their ills. But is Satan to blame? While he is the destroyer and brings evil, is he not permitted to do so, and if he is, why so?

The truth is that Satan can only do what he is "licensed" to do. If we sin, he has the right to do us evil. He is God's messenger and servant for evil. Therefore, we are foolish to blame him.

If we can blame anything or anyone other than ourselves, let us blame God, for He is the One Who governs all things. He is over Satan. The buck stops with Him.

However, we all know that God is, while being omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent, altogether righteous in His judgments, so we cannot justifiably blame Him. If God is the Sovereign Ruler over all things, both good and evil, we can only arrive at the logical conclusion that we are left to examine ourselves first and foremost in seeking the cause of our ailments and distresses.

That leaves us with having only ourselves to blame when evil comes, if there is any blame to be had.

If Satan *is* involved, it may well be that God sent him.

When we read the Book of Job, we find that Job was blessed in every way. He was protected by a hedge, Satan complained, so that he could not touch Job. God rules. The only way Satan could touch him was if God permitted it. Furthermore, when Satan was commissioned to do his evil, he could only go so far; he could not touch Job's life (Job 2:6). What he was permitted to do was with purpose, and by the time the job was done, Job abhorred himself of his self-righteousness and

"repented in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5-6). He came into the victorious life of God, entering his rest.

Therefore, one must be careful when considering rebuking Satan as many ignorantly do with great gusto and defiance, making a show of "exercising their authority and power in Christ":

"In the same way these dreamers make the flesh unclean, having no respect for authorities, and say evil of rulers. Now when Michael, one of the chief angels, was fighting against the Evil One for the body of Moses, fearing to make use of violent words against him, he only said, May the Lord be your judge. But these men say evil about such things as they have no knowledge of; and the things of which they have natural knowledge, like beasts without reason, are the cause of their destruction" (Jude 1:8-10 BBE).

If Satan *is* involved, it may well be that God sent him as He did with Job:

"And the Lord said to Satan, See, I give all he has into your hands, only do not put a finger on the man himself. And Satan went out from before the Lord" (Job 1:12).

And:

"And the Lord said to Satan, See, he is in your hands, only do not take his life" (Job 2:6).

That goes for evil spirits as well:

"And lest I exalt myself above measure by the excellence of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, an angel of Satan, that it might beat me, lest I exalt myself above measure. Concerning this I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my weaknesses, in order that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Corinthians 12:7-9 EMTV).

"And the LORD said, Who shall entice Ahab that he may go up and fall at Ramoth in Gilead? And one said this way, and another said that way. And there came forth a spirit and stood before Jehovah and said, I will entice him. And the LORD said to him, With what? And he said, I will go forth and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And He said, You shall entice him and succeed also. Go forth and do so. And now, behold, the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets, and the LORD has spoken evil concerning you" (1 Kings 22:20-23).

I do not say there is not a place for casting out devils or for even rebuking Satan; there is, for believers (Mark 16:17). I am only saying that one ought to do so by revelation and as directed by the Spirit of God, lest he be found to offend.

Job's story proves the miraculous work of God in one's life, healing included.

Job

Some use Job as an example to justify lack of healing. But here are some earmarks of Job's suffering that do not match those of the sick who make excuses, comparing themselves to Job:

First, Job suffered in all ways, all at once, suddenly, financially, familially, socially, physically, and mentally.

Second, Job's external life was exemplary, quite unlike the lives of many of those who compare themselves to Job.

Third, Job did not perish. On the contrary, he had all things restored to him twofold, even his years.

Fourth, Job served as a classical example for all. His Heavenly-ordained ordeal was a demonstration of God dealing with one who trusted in his own virtue and righteousness.

Fifth, Job's story proves, not denies, the miraculous work of God in one's life, healing included. Those who are beset with many troubles usually perish in them, unlike with Job, who came to a new understanding of God.

God placed this trouble on Paul to keep him humble.

Paul

His Thorn in the Flesh

Some use Paul's "thorn in the flesh" as an excuse, assuming it was a physical sickness, which it was not. Paul clearly declared this:

"And lest I exalt myself above measure by the excellence of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, an angel of Satan, that it might beat me, lest I exalt myself above measure. Concerning this I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness.' Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my weaknesses, in order that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in calamities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For whenever I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:7-10 EMTV).

There is no mention of sickness or disease. Paul had an abundance of revelation from God. Who can argue, reading his many letters and with so many being saved by hearing his gospel message? God placed this trouble on Paul to keep him humble. Rarely do those who suffer illnesses have an abundance of revelation or any other great spiritual or godly treasure or virtue. Invariably, I see them full of unbelief, stuck in their partisan, Babylonish doctrines and darkened religiosity, knowing nothing, yet thinking they know so much.

His Eyesight

A common speculation in evangelical circles is that Paul had problems with his eyesight. Entertaining this notion seems to originate in a desire to "prove" that if men of God, who were great examples of faith, can be ill, therefore it is not a problem in God's sight if other believers are ill. Let us look at the relevant passages:

"You know that because of weakness in the flesh I preached the gospel to you the former time. And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise nor disdain, but as an angel of God you received me, even as Christ Jesus. What then was your blessing? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have torn out your own eyes and given them to me!" (Galatians 4:13-15 EMTV)

In this instance, we see nothing more than an expression used to describe the great compassion the Galatians had for Paul, for whatever reason. It is that simple. It does not say what his trial in his flesh was. Why infer something that is not there? Why assume? Why speculate? I will tell you why. It is to find some excuse to justify oneself in hanging on to one's gods and sins. That's why.

Would it not be far better and easier to repent,
believe and receive healing?

The following verses have been used to perpetuate this excuse for unrepentance and consequent illness:

"Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand" (Galatians 6:11 KJV).

"See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand!" (Galatians 6:11 EMTV)

"Now, in these last sentences, I want to emphasize in the bold scrawls of my personal handwriting the immense importance of what I have written to you" (Galatians 6:11 MSG).

"See the size of the handwriting which I myself have made use of in writing to you" (Galatians 6:11 BBE).

"Look at how large the letters in these words are because I'm writing this myself" (Galatians 6:11 GW).

I have quoted several translations to demonstrate that there is no valid reason to conclude that Paul was referring to some ocular disease or malady. Obviously, there is debate by translators as to what Paul meant. Is Paul referring to his poor eyesight? Why would he even mention it, and that without explanation? For what good reason?

He was not one to be seeking recognition, attention, or sympathy, particularly in his letters, nor was he an idle babbler. And what if he was referring to his eyesight? Can anyone legitimately conclude that it was a sickness or disease? I understand Paul to be saying, in essence, "Look, I am personally taking great pains to address these matters. These things of which I am writing to you are very important." I see it as that simple and I think the KJV says it best.

Are these arguments and silly speculations not a classical case of grasping at straws? Would it not be far better and easier to repent, believe and receive healing, instead of clinging to one's gods, rationalizing, justifying oneself and making God out to be disinterested, impotent, removed, foolish, or even a liar?

That is the greatest gift true believers have,
access to God by His Spirit.

Timothy

In one place Paul advised Timothy to take no longer water only, but also to "use a little wine on account of [his] stomach and frequent infirmities" (1 Timothy 5:23). Some wonder why Paul did not pray for Timothy's healing, suggesting that miraculous healings were on the wane. Nonsense. Why look for complicated arguments when the simplest ones will do?

There was a readily available physical remedy for Timothy's digestive problems. In whatever circumstances we find ourselves, we should be doing what we can with those things God has already provided. Interestingly, the words also tell us that we should not look to the flesh (water), but to the Spirit (wine) for our health and wellbeing. That is the greatest gift true believers have, access to God by His Spirit.

Trophimus

There are those who defend the legitimacy of their illness before God and neighbor by citing a servant of the Lord who was ill:

"Erastus stayed at Corinth, but Trophimus I left sick at Miletus" (2 Timothy 4:20).

But why use this as an excuse? Is anyone familiar with the particulars? Could it be that Trophimus lacked faith or harbored sin? Of course, it is possible. It does not

say, but why grasp at a straw? Perhaps all he had was a cold or the flu, something that quickly passes. Would it not be something simple? Otherwise, one would think that Paul would have been graver about it.

Those who use him as an example to justify themselves often go to the grave.

Epaphroditus

Others use still another example as an excuse (How they will find a way to deny culpability for their sins and steadfastly cling to their horrible maladies):

Philippians 2:25-30 MKJV

(25) Yet I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow-worker, and fellow-soldier, but your messenger and he who ministered to my wants.

(26) For he longed after you all and was full of heaviness, because you had heard that he had been sick.

(27) For indeed he was sick, coming near death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

(28) Therefore I sent him the more eagerly, so that you may rejoice when you see him again, and that I may be the less sorrowful.

(29) Therefore receive him in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such in honor,

(30) because for the work of Christ he was near death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

I have yet to see one ill that has been so, particularly dying of cancer or heart disease, because of serving the Lord zealously (not that there have not been such). However, Epaphroditus was healed, was he not? Those who use him as an example to justify themselves often go to the grave. Ironically, they are praised for their faith, courage, meekness, "patience of Job," and "testimony of Christ" in the face of death. The truth is that they perish because of unbelief, fear, pride, arrogance disguised as patience, and denial of Christ and His promises, His Word. How deceptive are these things to those who have no eyes to see or hearts to comprehend!

Rachel

Jacob's wife, Rachel, died while birthing Benjamin. This tragic event is sometimes used as an example to justify illness and death among believers. One must wonder why God would permit Rachel to die in such a way. Could He not have prevented it? Surely. So why did He not do so? Was sin the cause of her death or not? The answers are right there for the record.

She broke every commandment in the "Book."

Genesis 31:11-35 MKJV

(11) And the Angel of God spoke to me in a dream, saying, Jacob! And I said, Here I am.

(12) And He said, Lift up your eyes and see all the rams which leap upon the cattle, that they are striped, speckled, and mottled. For I have seen all that Laban is doing to you.

(13) I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar, where you vowed a vow to Me. Now arise, get out from this land, and return to the land of your kindred.

(14) And Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house?

(15) Are we not counted strangers by him? For he has sold us, and has also entirely devoured our silver.

(16) For all the riches which God has taken from our father, that is for us and for our sons. Now then, whatever God has said to you, do.

(17) Then Jacob rose up and set his sons and wives upon camels.

(18) And he drove away all his cattle, and all his goods which he had gotten, the cattle of his property, which he had gotten in Padan-aram, in order to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan.

(19) And Laban went to shear his sheep. **And Rachel had stolen the images which were her father's.**

(20) And Jacob deceived the heart of Laban the Syrian, in that he did not tell him that he fled.

(21) And he fled with all that was his. And he rose up and passed over the river, and set his face toward Mount Gilead.

(22) It was told Laban on the third day that Jacob had fled.

(23) And he took his brothers with him, and pursued after him seven days' journey. And they overtook him in Mount Gilead.

(24) And God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said to him, Take heed that you do not speak either good or bad to Jacob.

(25) Then Laban overtook Jacob. And Jacob had pitched his tent in the mount. And Laban with his brothers pitched in Mount Gilead.

(26) And Laban said to Jacob, What have you done, that you have deceived my heart and carried away my daughters as captives taken with the sword?

(27) Why did you flee away secretly, and steal away from me, and did not tell me so that I might have sent you away with mirth, and with songs, with tabret and with harp?

(28) And why have you not allowed me to kiss my sons and my daughters? You have done foolishly in so doing.

(29) It is in the power of my hand to do you harm. But the God of your fathers spoke to me last night, saying, Take heed that you do not speak either good or bad to Jacob.

(30) And now you have gone because you longed after your father's house. **Why have you stolen my gods?**

(31) And Jacob answered and said to Laban, Because I was afraid, for I said,

Perhaps you would take your daughters away from me by force.

(32) **With whomever you find your gods, let him not live. Before our brothers, choose what is yours with me, and take it to you. For Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.**

(33) And Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the tents of the two slave women, and he did not find. And he went out of Leah's tent, and entered into Rachel's tent.

(34) **And Rachel had taken the images and put them into the camel's saddle, and sat on them. And Laban searched all the tent, but did not find them.**

(35) **But she said to her father, Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise up before you. For the custom of women is upon me. And he searched, but did not find the images.**

Rachel stole her father's gods (images). She broke every commandment in the Book:

- She did not honor the Second Commandment which says, "You shall not make unto yourself any graven image...."
- She dishonored the Fifth Commandment, dishonoring her father.
- She broke the Eighth Commandment, "You shall not steal."
- She broke the law, "You shall not covet your neighbor's goods."
- She committed spiritual adultery by having those images, thus breaking the Seventh Commandment.
- Obviously, the First Commandment was broken in that she did have strange gods before Him.
- She broke the Third by taking His Name in vain by what she did.
- The Sabbath is all about resting in God and keeping Him in honor. How does one keep holy the Sabbath, honoring God, when a thief and a liar?

James rightly says that when one breaks one law, he or she breaks all (James 2:10-11).

Furthermore, Jacob's words held true, though Jacob did not know they pertained to the woman he loved. He said, "**With whomever you find your gods, let him not live.**" God honored that word. We are not to speak words loosely.

Sufferings Common with the World

There are serious and ungodly sufferings among believers that are common with the world because these believers (or so-called believers) live as does the world and therefore are subject to the same consequences. It is not because these things are acceptable to God or "natural," or unavoidable. Believers have special responsibilities before God, unlike unbelievers, but they also have special privileges before Him, unlike unbelievers. Perishing with the troubles of the world is not the will of God, I can assure you, as the Scriptures unambiguously declare.

One Scripture used by some to justify their sickly lot:

"But you must resist the devil and stay strong in your faith. You know that all over the world the Lord's followers are suffering just as you are" (1 Peter 5:9 CEV).

They wrongly interpret those words with a little help at times from other translations. The intended comparison is to believers in Christ who are elsewhere in the world, and not to unbelievers who are deemed to be brothers in the general sense of the brotherhood of mankind. The latter interpretation may be a convenient one to absolve oneself of responsibility for one's miserable lot in this life through unbelief and disobedience to God, but it is a counterproductive interpretation, and often a deadly one as well.

If something is possible to us, God lets us search it out and learn.

As I write, I know a man perishing of cancer and other disease, one who has been offensive to the Lord, yet thinks he is quite spiritual. He is ignorant, proud, boastful, stubborn, closed, and hypocritical, yet professes faith in Jesus Christ and even has a sign in his yard, preaching repentance, a sign that says, "Prepare to meet Thy God." We have tried talking to him and he thinks we are mad or demonic. He does not believe a thing we say, not even when we only suggest effective, proven, physical means of healing.

Physical, Natural Means of Healing

A principle we often see at work is that if something is possible to us, God lets us search it out and learn, or He simply provides those possibilities to us. If we are humble and open, we will receive them. If not, we perish.

The remarkable thing is that some will look for miraculous intervention and refuse all else, thinking they may compromise their faith in God to heal, and thus they perish. Others will look only for the scientific or explainable, placing their trust in conventional medicine and free medical care, not believing in the efficacy of sound alternative or natural healthcare, or in the miraculous, and they perish, though often professing to believe.

Let me give you an example of where there was unconscious sin and, upon confession, a physical remedy. My son broke out in a skin disease on the face. It began to spread and fester, though we tried various natural products to deal with it. Nothing availed. We took him to a doctor who diagnosed the condition as ringworm and prescribed a skin cream, which did not work. Meanwhile, my son confessed that he had harbored unforgiveness toward me. He cried, admitting he was wrong, but also that he was bound by this unforgiveness. He said he had tried forgiving but could not overcome it. Brother Mark and I asked if he wanted us to pray for him. He consented, we prayed for him, and several of us received that he would be okay.

Jonathan's spirit has changed.

His face, however, continued to get worse. Back to the doctor we went, and he was stumped. He decided to take the "next step" and prescribed a "light" steroid cream to see if that would work, and Jonathan's face began to clear.

What happened was that the Lord blocked the remedy until the sin was confessed and repented of. When the issue was dealt with, the Lord opened the way for healing. Did He miraculously heal? While He did not apparently override natural laws, He miraculously opened the way for my son to forgive me where he was powerless to do so, and used natural means and conventional medicine to effect the cure.

Jonathan's spirit has changed and I am thankful. The skin disease was God's notification it was time to do something about his inner problem that had festered for years. It is never about the external or the seen. It is ever an internal, hidden issue... always.

Why conventional medicine? Why steroid creams that can be toxic? Why not alternative healing with natural substances, which we would much prefer?

Oftentimes, when I have preferred a miracle by faith or at least alternative healthcare, the Lord has driven us into the hands of conventional medical care, as well as chiropractors, physical therapists, dentists, naturopaths, homeopaths, nutritionists, etc., and their methods have brought results. By doing things this way, the Lord has demonstrated His sovereignty to me: "I am over all things, including the medical establishment." It is all about Him and not anything external, whether we perceive it to be good or evil.

Where a thing is impossible, that is where God comes in; that is where He is glorified. "With men, some things are impossible, but with God, all things are possible."

It is often said that without health, life is not worth living. How true! The Bible says this:

"Our LORD and our God, You are like the sun and also like a shield. You treat us with kindness and with honor, never denying any good thing to those who live right" (Psalms 84:11 CEV).

"Those who obey the LORD are daily in His care, and what He has given them will be theirs forever. They won't be in trouble when times are bad, and they will have plenty when food is scarce" (Psalms 37:18-19 CEV).

Psalms 91:1-11 GW

(1) Whoever lives under the shelter of the Most High will remain in the shadow of the Almighty.

(2) I will say to the LORD, "You are my refuge and my fortress, my God in Whom I

trust."

(3) He is the One Who will rescue you from hunters' traps and from deadly plagues.

(4) He will cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you will find refuge.

His truth is your shield and armor.

(5) You do not need to fear terrors of the night, arrows that fly during the day,

(6) plagues that roam the dark, epidemics that strike at noon.

(7) They will not come near you, even though a thousand may fall dead beside you or ten thousand at your right side.

(8) You only have to look with your eyes to see the punishment of wicked people.

(9) You, O LORD, are my refuge! You have made the Most High your home.

(10) No harm will come to you. No sickness will come near your house.

(11) He will put his angels in charge of you to protect you in all your ways.

Are those words not an indictment on the sick and dying who profess faith in God, even on those who do not, but especially on those who do? Are they not wonderful promises to those who believe?

If any man fails, it must never be said that God is to blame.

Man's Failure Does Not Prove God Wrong

Let me qualify something here. I am speaking the truth, and the Scriptures verify or bear witness to what I say. Now if I, having preached these things, should die of some malady like cancer or heart disease, would I then be proven wrong in what I preach? Would the Bible, or our interpretation of it, be proven wrong?

The answer is an unequivocal, resounding, "God forbid!" If I die of some disease or tragic mishap, it will not be because God's grace was not intended or available. It will be because I have failed, in unbelief and disobedience, to avail myself of it. It is that simple.

If any man fails, it must never be said that God is to blame or that He is not willing, ready, and able to heal, or that the Bible must mean something else than what I preach here. We are never to discount the truth by the circumstances.

That is what is happening with most people. They see ***professing*** believers in Christ dying, so they automatically deny the testimony of God. They believe what they see. They judge after the appearance. They do not believe God. Is it any wonder they do not receive?

Let this sink into your ears:

"For what if some did not believe? Surely their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God? Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar, just as it is written: 'That You may be justified in Your words, and You may overcome when You are judged'" (Romans 3:3-4 EMTV).

If we suffer ill health when God's will is health, let us look to ourselves for the problem and not disbelieve God or His sure Word.

She readily recognized her unworthiness.

Instances of Illness without Sin

There are those times in which God is willing to heal, and those in which He is not. Here are some examples of death, illness, or physical handicap **with the absence of sin**, where He was willing to heal:

The Widow's Son Healed by Elijah

1 Kings 17:17-24 MKJV

(17) And it happened after these things the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick. And his sickness was so severe that there was no breath left in him.

(18) **And she said to Elijah, What do I have to do with you, O man of God? Have you come to me to call my sin to remembrance and to kill my son?**

(19) And he said to her, Give me your son. And he took him out of her bosom and carried him up into a loft, where he stayed, and laid him on his own bed.

(20) And he cried to the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, have You also brought evil on the widow with whom I am staying, by slaying her son?

(21) And he stretched himself on the child three times, and cried to the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, please let this child's soul come to him again.

(22) And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah, and the soul of the child came into him again, and he lived.

(23) And Elijah took the child and brought him down out of the room into the house and delivered him to his mother. And Elijah said, See! Your son lives!

(24) And the woman said to Elijah, Now I know this, that you are a man of God, and that the Word of the LORD in your mouth is truth.

I bolded the widow's words to point out that she readily recognized her unworthiness. Of many widows in that day of widespread famine, she was the only one that had faith. A realization and candid, humble acknowledgment of unworthiness before God is a true mark of faith, pleasing to God. In that case, God was glorifying Himself in Elijah, and both the woman and her son were saved.

Lazarus

Lazarus, too, became sick, and even died, but there was no sin involved. His sickness was for Jesus' glory:

"When Jesus heard, He said, This sickness is not to death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God might be glorified by it" (John 11:4).

Please read the whole story.

The Blind Man

So it was also with the blind man, whom Jesus healed:

"And passing by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, Master, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither has this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God might be revealed in him" (John 9:1-3).

Please read the whole story.

To praise one dying of sickness is to praise the flesh and the Devil.

In the above three examples, there was illness and death, but not because of sin. Let sinners beware of excusing themselves and their illnesses by these examples. Acknowledge that all these were healed.

Many go to the grave and, unlike Lazarus, remain there, with family and friends praising their courage, patience, selflessness and faith when there was truly nothing of the kind. Yes, we are all sympathetic with our lost ones, especially when they suffer and die, but lies, flatteries and excuses will not help them. They will not help the survivors or anyone else, and they certainly will not please God. To praise one dying of sickness is to praise the flesh and the Devil.

Illness Without Sin where God Does Not Heal

There are varying exceptions or qualifications to all that has been said heretofore. That is to say that there are cases where sin is not directly involved in some situations of illness or suffering but also wherein it is not necessarily God's will to heal:

"Death Illness" - A Condition that Comes with Death

In such cases, persons are not dying because they are ill; they are ill because they are dying. Jacob and Elisha are such examples:

"And it happened after these things, that one told Joseph, Behold, your father is sick. And he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim" (Genesis 48:1).

"And Jacob finished commanding his sons, and he gathered his feet into the bed. And he expired, and was gathered to his people" (Genesis 49:33).

2 Kings 13:14-21 MKJV

(14) And Elisha had fallen sick with his illness in which he died. And Jehoash the king of Israel came down to him and wept over his face. And he said, O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen of it!

(15) And Elisha said to him, Take bow and arrows. And he took bow and arrows to himself.

(16) And he said to the king of Israel, Put your hand on the bow. And he placed his hand. And Elisha put his hands on the king's hands.

(17) And he said, Open the window eastward. And he opened. And Elisha said, Shoot! And he shot. And he said, The arrow of the LORD's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria. For you shall strike the Syrians in Aphek until it is finished.

(18) And he said, Take the arrows. And he took them. And he said to the king of Israel, Strike on the ground. And he struck three times and stopped.

(19) And the man of God was angry with him, and said, You should have stricken five or six times, then you would have stricken Syria until it was finished. But now you shall strike Syria three times.

(20) And Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at first of the year.

(21) And it happened as they were burying a man, behold, they spied a band. And they threw the man into the grave of Elisha. And the man went down and touched the bones of Elisha, and revived and stood up on his feet.

People are willing to take any example to justify their sins or sicknesses.

Many professing faith in Christ do not believe in disease as necessarily caused by sin, nor do they believe in miraculous healing as a legitimately common or viable event in the believer's life today. It is a remarkable thing that people are willing to take any remote or isolated example to justify their sins or sicknesses, like citing Deborah, a judge of Israel, to justify women in leadership of authority over men. So they use Elisha's illness unto death as argument for their own illness as not caused by sin. They do not perceive that Elisha died of the **"death sickness,"** and **not a sickness that caused death,** as I have related earlier.

It is argued that sickness did indeed bring Elisha's death because the King James has it worded this way:

"Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof" (2 Kings 13:14).

However, other versions say it somewhat differently:

"Some time before the death of King Jehoash, Elisha the prophet was very sick and about to die" (2 Kings 13:14 CEV).

"Elisha became fatally ill" (2 Kings 13:14 GW).

"Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness of which he died" (2 Kings 13:14 HNV).

“Elisha came down sick. It was the sickness of which he would soon die” (2 Kings 13:14 MSG).

There is more than one way to interpret those words. The Strong’s definition for “sick,” and the root word for “sickness,” as used in 2 Kings, is:

“A primitive root (compare H2342, H2490); properly to **be rubbed** or **worn**; hence (figuratively) to be weak, sick, afflicted; or (causatively) to grieve, make sick; also to stroke (in flattering), entreat: - beseech, (be) diseased, (put to) grief, be grieved, (be) grievous, infirmity, intreat, lay to, put to pain, X pray, make prayer, be (fall, make) sick, sore, be sorry, make suit (X supplication), woman in travail, be (become) weak, be wounded.”

Will anyone accuse one doubly anointed of dying a disease of the Egyptians?

Does that not support the sickness of death? **Worn out?** Yes, it does. No problem there. That is not to say that the word cannot be used for other afflictions, as it is on other occasions in Scripture, but it certainly does not rule out what I said about Elisha's condition, comparable perhaps with King David's, whose body was ceasing to function at old age (1 Kings 1). Furthermore, where is there proof that Elisha was afflicted otherwise, with a "disease of the Egyptians," for example? Anyone surmising so is doing just that, surmising.

But let us grant for a moment that Elisha's death **was indeed** due to illness. Will anyone dare accuse one doubly anointed of dying a disease of the Egyptians, a condemnation that comes only if one does not keep God's commandments (Exodus 15:26)? God's Word says that we are to establish a thing by two or three witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:15). Elisha is but one example in the whole Bible where sin is not so easily identified as the cause of illness and death, being that he was a great prophet. I know of no other such examples.

However, the question remains: How is it that Elisha would die in illness while Moses, for example, would die seemingly strong and whole, and Elijah, his predecessor, who had only half the anointing, would not even die? Why could not Elisha simply and comfortably expire? I believe the answer is that Elisha needed to be humbled. The Bible clearly states that no man is righteous, not one (Romans 3:10-18). That includes Elisha. Was his sin one he deliberately committed? No. Was it something he neglected to do that was required of him? No. Was it a sin of attitude? No. He was prepared to obey in all things. However, disposition is another thing, and there is the key.

Elisha's disposition was one that fell short of God's will.

When Elijah asked Elisha what he would request, he *asked for*, and *received*, a *double anointing*. Now why would one ask for an anointing that was double of one already extraordinary? Selfishness, pride, and ungodly ambitions make such requests. That is why Elijah, though he did not write off Elisha's request, did say, "You ask a hard thing" (2 Kings 2:9-10). It would not have been hard for God to give him ten times the anointing of Elijah. What then was hard about it?

Think of it: Elisha cursed the children, wherein 42 died (2 Kings 2:23-24)... an unusual thing, which demonstrated something of the spirit Jesus rebuked of James and John (Luke 9:52-56). Though God's grace was undeniably upon Elisha, Elisha had to die a humbling death. God was dealing with his disposition. "He saved others, but could not save himself" (Matthew 27:39-43).

Elijah's dealings with the two captains and their fifties upon whom he called down fire from heaven to devour them (2 Kings 1:10-14) are different from Elisha's cursing the children that cursed him. Elijah was not reacting. When the captains came to arrest him by command of their wicked king, they were not coming at him personally. In fact, they addressed him as "man of God." On the other hand, Elisha reacted to the children because of *personal* attacks, though the power of God was enforced in both cases.

I believe that Elisha died humbled. Would it not be humbling, and perhaps for him, humiliating, that he should have double the anointing Elijah had, yet die sick, while Elijah did not even die? Elisha's disposition was one that fell short of God's will. "They that live by the sword, die by the sword." Also, "As a man sows, so shall he also reap."

This leads us to another important point. There are sins of commission, omission and attitude, which kill. These are to be confessed and disposed of. In obedience to God, we have the opportunity and likelihood of His forgiveness and healing, as He has promised. Yet, there are other cases, as with Elisha, matters of disposition, which bring the "best in Christ down." We are all in "wrongness," our unrighteousness commending God's righteousness. We serve Him with and in our infirmities.

What then is the point of all this? If we are all in wrongness, what chance do we have of remaining healthy unto death?

The point is that repentance and healing are available in the vast majority of cases, if people will only believe and obey. If they wish to use Elisha's excuse, though dissimilar, so be it, or if their case is similar to, or the same as, Elisha's case, so be it. If people who insist upon an unnecessary death wish to justify themselves in their sins, who can, or wishes to, argue? Besides, God has appointed vessels of mercy and vessels of wrath.

I will not be chagrined in failure to dissuade vessels of wrath, but I am privileged and thankful to present the truth to those vessels of honor, so they might be saved.

The consequences of sin in our bloodlines begin to diminish, fade, and disappear.

Conditions through Heredity and the Sins of the Fathers

When David sinned with Bathsheba, the baby they had became ill and died. Many years later, David would lose three more sons because of his sins. David's son, Amnon, violated his half-sister, Tamar, for which Absalom, her full brother, another of David's sons, killed Amnon. Later, Absalom attempted to usurp his father's throne and was slain by David's general. Then when David was about to die, his oldest son, Adonijah, attempted to seize the throne and succeed David in the rulership of Israel. However, Solomon was God's and David's chosen successor, and when Adonijah conspired to take the kingdom from Solomon, Solomon had him killed.

With at least the first three of these sons, death came because of David's sins years before, and were not reversible. No amount of prayer would have changed God's vengeance on David's terrible trespass of committing adultery and slaying Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, who was a faithful warrior for David. In fact, David had fasted and prayed for the child born to Bathsheba, to no avail.

The commandment is sure:

"Never make your own carved idols or statues that represent any creature in the sky, on the earth, or in the water. Never worship them or serve them, because I, the LORD your God, am a God who does not tolerate rivals. **I punish children for their parents' sins to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me.** But I show mercy to thousands of generations of those who love Me and obey My commandments" (Exodus 20:4-6 GW).

I know I have suffered many things inherited from my forefathers. Yet, God is faithful and because I was granted salvation, He has been gracious, limiting the effects of the sins of my ancestors and even neutralizing them. When we begin to walk by faith, the consequences of sin in our bloodlines begin to diminish, fade, and finally disappear. However, I can testify that it does not happen all at once and it does not happen the moment one repents and becomes a believer, or even when he has received the Spirit of God. The process for me has been gradual, over decades.

Cleansing, Immune-building Illnesses Common to All

Why is there no known cure or sure remedy for the cold? How is it mankind can do so many things, yet fail against it? Why do we often feel more energized after a cold?

My understanding of colds is that when we are physically run down, the body builds up toxins which must be unloaded, systems are in need of repair and renovation, and the body lacks the energy to do those things along with everything else we do from day to day. Thus, the body says, "Enough is enough; we have to do something here, or we will be facing bigger trouble." You "catch" a cold, and get shut down or slowed down considerably; mucous is produced; wastes, damaged materials and toxins are expelled; the body goes through a general cleansing, and you recover. This happens as frequently as there is need.

The only things that seem to help are rest, plenty of water, and some elements that enhance recovery, like antioxidants, good Vitamin C, lemon juice with honey, and other aids like steam or sauna baths or hot baths in good water to help expel wastes and toxins.

However, colds come in intensity and frequency according to our health, lifestyles, and attitudes.

The Consequences of "Pre-faith" Sins Continue Almost Invariably

I had my tonsils taken out when I was 8 or 9. One cannot escape the consequences of removing God-given body parts and organs, no matter how useless the unbelieving medical profession thinks them to be (unless the Lord has done something there for me without my knowing it).

I injured my neck in a fall when I was about 13 or 14, in which four vertebrae or more were damaged. I have suffered much physical and mental pain to this day from that injury.

I also seriously injured my right leg in a skiing fall when I was nearly 25, about 2 years before becoming a believer. But I must say that the Lord has given me uncommon and unexpected improvements that enable me to live a life of normality.

Our greatest "curses" can be our greatest blessings.

My leg injury in pre-Christian days was the firm, judgmental hand of God to chasten me and to pull me aside in the busy-ness of the activities of this world. It was my time to come to Him. Did He have to be so rough? Certainly! Otherwise, He would not have done it. Although I did not believe at the time, how I wished, in

those primary days of the injury, that I would wake up one morning with my leg fully healed! I would dream about it, then wake up disappointed.

Does God miraculously heal some of these things? Indeed He does, and I am witness to such, though I have not often seen Him do so. I also have heard false testimonies, several of them, coming forth from mercenary false ministers, who delight in ever so brazenly suckering crowds of silly and gullible "believers" for glory and gain. Hinn and Popoff are classic examples.

I have seen God miraculously heal believers of serious injuries incurred *as* believers. He was proving to these persons His Presence, sovereignty, might, love and faithfulness, dealing with their unbelief, countering the influence of men's unbelieving religious doctrines and practices.

I must also say that God has tempered my injury sufferings, leaving me with what degree is needful, and has permitted me to lead a normal lifestyle in spite of the magnitude of my injuries to neck and leg. He has definitely used those injuries for good, has chastened and molded me with their discomforts, and thus have I been blessed by them, even as Paul was benefited by his thorn in the flesh, a messenger from Satan to buffet him for humility's sake. Besides, my broken leg precipitated my spiritual journey to Him so that I realize how our greatest "curses" can be our greatest blessings.

It was at age 27 that I became a believer. I had my appendix removed only a few months after my conversion. You may ask, "Why did you have an appendix problem as a believer if you believe in healing?" The appendix problem was a condition resulting from years of abuse as a nonbeliever; I was still living in ignorance about diet and proper health care at the time of my conversion, and I was not yet aware of the availability of God's healing; nobody I knew believed in healing and I was not being taught. "For lack of knowledge, My people perish."

I also had many dental cavities before I became a believer, which greatly decreased in numbers after believing, but my cavities and fillings did not disappear. And for three decades, I carried 13 amalgam (mercury) fillings in my mouth. Mercury, I am told, is one of the most toxic substances known to man. In my ignorance, I was carrying a terrible poison day and night in my mouth.

We also had vaccinations as children, which are literal injections of poison into the bloodstream, with ill effects, often disastrous, like autism and even death. We cannot escape the consequences of error and wrongdoing in ignorance, although there is no doubt in my mind that God makes allowance for ignorance. The Bible says so:

"And you shall have one law for him who acts through ignorance; for him that is native among the sons of Israel and for the alien that resides among them. But the soul who acts with a high hand, whether of the native or of the alien, the same blasphemes Jehovah. And that soul shall be cut off from among His people" (Numbers 15:29-30).

The former toxins need cleaning up. It takes time.

Speaking of ignorance and its consequences, diet and environment play a powerful role in our health. While we may not be wilfully, consciously sinning against God, we may be sinning nevertheless. Doing so, we do reap the consequences.

Many professing faith in Christ are living reckless, irresponsible, religious, self-righteous, ignorant lives, thinking to be better off than the world, yet perishing with the world because thinking and acting like the world in many respects, defiling themselves, their loved ones, their animals and environments in many ways, directly or indirectly (by supporting destructive practices). It is written that God destroys them that destroy the earth (Revelation 11:18). Read [Christian Physical Diet](#).

Again, we do not have our "slates wiped clean" for the consequences of past sins, at least not at once, if in this life at all. Liken salvation to shutting down a factory spewing toxins and setting up a new, clean one. The former toxins still need cleaning up and until they are removed, the environment and those exposed to it suffer. It takes time. However, let those who use this truth as an excuse in their unabating ailment know that God always brings improvement and progress from the time of faith and obedience.

There are other issues of suffering and tragedy related, if remotely, to this subject of healing. Let us answer some questions:

Suicide

What about death by suicide? Is that ever justified? The answer is "No." While as a true believer, I will not impose my will personally or democratically as a voter upon those who wish to determine their own course in this matter, I do know that the one viable option for anyone is to seek after God, in the matter I have prescribed above, no matter what they suffer, and He will provide all that is necessary in any situation, no matter how great the need.

(Read [On the Question of Suicide](#).)

There is not a sparrow or a hair that falls to the ground without God's say-so.

Accidental Injury and Death

There are no accidents. My skiing injury was no accident. I was a fool, overweight and drunk, trying to impress others. Pride was my garment. I wore it inside and out. Down I went, as do all the proud, sooner or later. There is not a sparrow or a hair that falls to the ground without God's say-so:

"Are not five sparrows sold for two assaria? And not one of them is forgotten before God. But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Therefore do not fear, you are of more value than many sparrows" (Luke 12:6-7).

We had a friend whose father-in-law died of a tractor accident. When I told her that he did not die without cause, that he was not living a life pleasing to the Lord, and that he did not go directly "into the arms of Jesus" (what carnal fantasies professing Christians have!) though he professed faith, she cut off all relations with us. (That's loving your enemies, isn't it?)

Our sins, not fate or chance or devils or mistakes or faulty tractors or spooked horses or drunk drivers or any other things, bring untimely, premature, or accidental death.

We get only what is needed or deserved, in all cases, or God is not in control and we are left to a capricious universe.

Our sins kill others. Others' sins kill us. "No man is an island unto himself." Ultimately, there is no such thing as an innocent suffering consequence.

Premature Death

Aside from the enormous privilege of martyrdom, God would have us to live a full and vibrant life, full of years, though not necessarily with the wealth of this world in abundance. All needs are met comfortably. However, premature death, by whatever means, is not the norm, it is not natural, and it is not the will of God, except as a necessity caused by something that has not been right.

I lost a brother (physical and spiritual) in his early twenties to leukemia. Weeks after he was taken, the Lord told me that He had to take him because he was not willing to make a break with the world. Months later, He sent a woman to me, whom I did not know, with words to confirm what He told me.

"With long life I will satisfy him, and show him My salvation" (Psalms 91:16).

And wisdom says: "My son, forget not my law; but let your heart keep my commandments; **for they shall add length of days, and long life, and peace to you.** Let not mercy and truth forsake you; tie them around your neck; write them upon the tablet of your heart; and you shall find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man" (Proverbs 3:1-4).

Such horrors on earth are the results of sinning.

What about the death of infants, a life cut off before it begins? We know that a baby has not yet heard or known anything that should cause it to suffer from disobedience. It is therefore the result of the sins of the mothers and fathers or those before them.

For example, have you been smoking and drinking while pregnant, mother? Was there adultery or other sin in your life before you had the child, as with David? How serious a matter sin is! Everyone needs to take note! Such horrors on earth are the results of sinning.

But God has mercy on the repentant ones, and restores, one way or another. He has often done so. Therefore men of God are sent to preach repentance. They, being prepared of God, know the pain and suffering firsthand. Hear what one man of God who suffered in his life, for his own, and then the sins of others (contending with the unfaithful people of God), said:

"A curse on the day of my birth: let there be no blessing on the day when my mother had me. A curse on the man who gave the news to my father, saying, You have a male child; making him very glad. May that man be like the towns overturned by the Lord without mercy: let a cry for help come to his ears in the morning, and the sound of war in the middle of the day; Because he did not put me to death before my birth took place: so my mother's body would have been my last resting-place, and she would have been with child for ever. Why did I come from my mother's body to see pain and sorrow, so that my days might be wasted with shame?" (Jeremiah 20:14-18 BBE)

Martyrdom

Those who die or suffer affliction in whatever form for Christ and the gospel are, of course, not suffering because of sin, but against sin, although they learn obedience by the things they suffer, even as did the Lord. There is a good suffering unto God, with which He is well pleased:

"For Jesus, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong cryings and tears to Him Who was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared, though being a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered" (Hebrews 5:7-8).

"Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His faithful ones" (Psalms 116:15 GW).

Persecution?

There is a persecution because we love God. As Paul writes to Timothy:

"But you have fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, patience, persecutions, afflictions, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra. What persecutions I endured! But the Lord delivered me out of all. Yea, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Timothy 3:10-12).

When we receive chastening from the Lord
humbly, He is moved.

There is also a persecution because we do not love God, though we appear, or pretend, to do so, fooling others, but not God:

"For before these days Theudas rose up, boasting himself to be somebody; a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves to him; who was slain. And all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered and brought to nothing. After this one, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the Registration, and drew away considerable people after him. Yet that one perished; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered" (Acts 5:36-37).

The Great Importance of Thanksgiving and Praise to God for All

One thing more do I have to add to these things, and it is highly important. I have found out another secret of life. When we receive chastening from the Lord humbly, without complaint or resistance, graciously yielding to His rod of correction, He is moved as at no other time. Moreover, if we can give thanks and praise to Him for His chastisements, in whatever form they come, He will shake loose the chains from our limbs and He will shake the earth to open the prison doors for our release. It is written:

"The sacrifice pleasing to God is a broken spirit. O God, You do not despise a broken and sorrowful heart" (Psalms 51:17 GW).

When we give thanks and praise to God for all things, victory is ours:

"Whoever offers thanks as a sacrifice honors Me. I will let everyone who continues in My way see the salvation that comes from God" (Psalms 50:23 GW).

It is important to know that even sickness and injury serve for good. As the Word of God says:

"And we know that **all things** work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

As the Scripture says:

"Whatever happens, give thanks, because it is God's will in Christ Jesus that you do this" (1 Thessalonians 5:18 GW).

There, I have given you the secrets to all success. By His grace you shall have them for your own, and prosper not only yourself but also all who believe, because it is declared:

"And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is glorified, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Corinthians 12:26).

When you lose, we lose; when you gain, we gain. Therefore we not only preach for your sake and for the Lord's, but also for ourselves. Why should we suffer unnecessarily and indefinitely? Contending earnestly for the faith of substance, the faith with sure hope, the faith that rewards, comforts, and heals,

Victor Hafichuk

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