

Are Christians Supposed to Be Healed?

<u>James 5:15</u>: (NASB) and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

To have faith is to have an awesome power, for it connects you to something outside of yourself and sometimes to something within yourself that can alter your way of life. Now, depending on what you put your faith in, this altered way of life can end up leading to great advantage or to great disappointment. One thing many Christians put their faith is in the concept of miraculous healing. Today's discussion will revolve around the pointed question: Should Christians seek - or even believe in - the miraculous faith healing claims that many make and live by in the name of Christ?

(I)) Introduction, Does Faith Healing Work, History Channel

- (Evangelist) Oh boy! Let her go! That's the power of the Holy Spirit. Give the Lord a clap offering. Come on! Come on!
- (Narrator) Faith healing is a part of modern life. Are the cures it claims to accomplish real?



- (Doctor) I think at a meeting of faith healing where a person gets up and actually walks, who had not walked prior to the faith healing, is a case of questionable pathologies.
- (Narrator) Between religion and medicine, the laying on of hands remains a subject of intense controversy.

Where does the idea of healing get its start in the Bible? There are 12 instances of individual "healing" in the Old Testament:

- Five were healing episodes of injury or sickness God had inflicted, or allowed to be inflicted, as punishment.
- Two granted the ability to bear children to women of faith both to honor those who served God.
- One was to show the greatness of the God of Israel to a non-Jew: Naaman the army general and Elisha.
- One was the result of King Hezekiah with a terminal illness praying for an extension of life to serve God.
- Three raised individuals from the dead technically not healing rather the restoring of life.



Observations of Old Testament "healing:"

- Healing was not a focus of the Old Testament.
- A prophet of God is generally associated with the healing.
- All of the healings had purpose beyond the actual healing.
- Five of the seven events that were not inflicted or allowed by God involved Elijah or Elisha.
- The other two were directly related to serving Israel: Samuel's birth and Hezekiah's life.
- In summary, healing in the Old Testament was not common. When it was done, it was very selective.

Jesus brought healing to a level never before heard of!

<u>Mark 3:7-10</u>: (NASB) ⁷Jesus withdrew to the sea with his disciples; and a great multitude from Galilee followed; and also from Judea, ⁸and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and beyond the Jordan, and the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon, a great number of people heard of all that he was doing and came to him. ⁹And he told his disciples that a boat should stand ready for him because of the crowd, so that they would not crowd him; ¹⁰for he had healed many, with the result that all those who had afflictions pressed around him in order to touch him.

With Jesus, it seemed almost as if healing poured out of him - these people who pressed against him were *not* disciples - they were simply people who wanted to be healed! Note he was not healing his believers.

There are many cultures throughout history and throughout the world that have had faith healing as a centerpiece of their societies:

(I))Christian tradition, Does Faith Healing Work, History Channel

• (Narrator) The rituals of a Peruvian witch doctor are uniquely her own. It is a fact, however, that throughout the world the practices may differ, but the religious principles behind faith healing are the same. It claims to be divinely inspired. Nowhere is divine healing so well documented as in the Christian faith. In the Gospel according to Saint John, Jesus performed his first healing in Galilee. He cured the son of a nobleman. This began a tradition which evangelists have continued into modern times.

Does the "healing" in all of these places and circumstances come from God? We think not. What then can be the source? We will develop a suggestion as to how these things happen.

(1))Introduction, Placebo, Cracking the Code, Nicholas Humphrey

• In a remote corner of southwest Ireland, five of the world's top scientists gather. Their mission: to investigate a series of bizarre events around the world. In Los Angeles, a woman devastated by depression is mysteriously cured by a fake pill. In Italy, high tech science begins to explain why a dead saint might have cured a man of multiple sclerosis. And in Texas, a war veteran's crippling knee pain is cured by fake surgery. They are dramatic instances of what doctors call the "placebo effect," a strange healing force that lies deep within us.



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What did the healing practices of Jesus look like what were the common denominators?

First observation: Jesus was not selective with healing; rather, he was generous!

<u>Luke 6:17-19</u>: (NASB) ¹⁷Jesus came down with them and stood on a level place; and there was a large crowd of his disciples, and a great throng of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon, ¹⁸who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were being cured. ¹⁹And all the people were trying to touch him, for power was coming from him and healing them all.

Jesus healed the masses - notice it was *not* his disciples who came to be healed. Whether or not the healed had faith was not an issue.

(1) White pill/blue pill, Eric Mead, The Magic of the Placebo, TedMedTalk

• I read a study a year or so ago that really blew my mind wide open. I'm not a doctor or researcher so this to me was an astonishing thing. Turns out that if you administer a placebo in the form of a white pill that's like aspirin-shaped, just a round white pill, it has some certain measureable effect. But if you change the form that you give the placebo in, like you make a smaller pill and color it blue and stamp a letter into it, it is actually measurably more effective. Even though neither one of these things has any pharmaceutical quality - they are sugar pills. But a white pill is not as good as a blue pill.

In the most basic sense, the placebo effect is the human mind giving itself permission to do things it did not think it could do.



Second observation: Jesus did not require great faith on the part of those healed, for his healing was an act of mercy and not some kind of reward.

Luke 17:12-19: (NASB) ¹²As he entered a village, ten leprous men who stood at a distance met him; ¹³and they raised their voices, saying, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us! ¹⁴When he saw them, he said to them, Go and show yourselves to the priests. And as they were going, they were cleansed. ¹⁵Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, ¹⁶and he fell on his face at his feet, giving thanks to him. And he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷Then Jesus answered and said, Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine—where are they? ¹⁸Was no one found who returned to give glory to God, except this foreigner? ¹⁹And he said to him, Stand up and go; your faith has made you well.

Jesus heals ten lepers (nine based on mercy and one based on faith) - none were known to have followed him. Were the nine healed just out of mercy classified as "believers?" No, the only connection they have to Jesus is they were healed. Why was the one who had faith singled out when he received the same healing? The one who developed faith could be blessed further than even the healing. The mercy is what gave the healing but faith built upon that healing could create something greater.



(I)) Aimee Semple McPherson, Does Faith Healing Work, History Channel

- (Narrator) In the 1920's, the founder of the Angelus Temple used radio to bring the ancient practice of faith healing to the masses. America was stirred by the popular broadcast of evangelist Amy Semple McPherson.
- (Amy Semple McPherson) Be freed for the sword of the word of God is quick and chaste and powerful. Glory to God, hallelujah... Now lose your limbs and now you're free and straighten up. Daughters be thou made whole! The Lord thy God has found thee and set thee free. The glory be to God.



• (Narrator) Sixty years later, the healing traditions of Amy Semple McPherson continue to be practiced.

Ms. McPherson introduced a lot of the same things that happen in the context of modern Christian "faith" healing:

- Prayer often rhythmic and flowery
- Music of praise and worship, pumping up the emotions of the audience
- "Laying on of hands" by a powerful, charismatic preacher
- Includes repetition and great passion
- During a Christian worship service a large service usually with thousands - emotionally charged and energetic
- > Done only for the benefit of believers, as "faith" is a key component

This cannot compare with how Jesus healed.

(I)) Janice's depression, Placebo, Cracking the Code, Nicholas Humphrey

- (Nicholas Humphrey) Janice Shunfeld volunteered for an anti-depressant trial at the University of California in Los Angeles in 1997. She had no idea that she was about to contribute to a breakthrough in placebo research.
- (Janice) I saw a story in the newspaper about the study at UCLA and it prompted me immediately to call. I had been wanting some help. I had been going through such a severe battle of depression. Just crying spontaneously. It was very difficult for me to just do ordinary tasks during the day.
- (Nicholas) Janice could barely get out of bed in the morning, and she knew it was finally time to do something about it. At stake was her 12-year marriage to her husband, Perry, and her relationship with her much loved daughter, Jenna.



Third observation: Jesus healed for the glory of God and the glory of the Gospel. He even healed those who would do him harm!

Luke 22:48-51: (NASB) ⁴⁸But Jesus said to him, Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss? ⁴⁹When those who were around him saw what was going to happen, they said, Lord, shall we strike with the sword? ⁵⁰And one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. ⁵¹But Jesus answered and said, Stop! No more of this. And he touched his ear and healed him.



Jesus healed Malchus who had no faith, was not asking for healing and who certainly was not a follower of Jesus.

The pattern Jesus set is very different from the pattern we see in the world today. What is the one common denominator in the healings done by Jesus? *He focused on non-believers*! He focused on those who did *not* believe in order to show them God's grace.

So, if healing wasn't a reward for faith, then why did Jesus heal?

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• (Narrator) Whatever the term, staggering numbers of healings are claimed by such evangelists as Kathryn Kuhlman.



(Kathryn Kuhlman in the 1940's) You want to know the why of these miracles? You want to know the why of it? It's not Kathryn Kuhlman; it's not some personality. I'm giving you the world to picture but remember something; there is the spiritual side. Somebody received the healing for emphysema. Just breath very deeply. You find that you're breathing perfectly to treat that emphysema there. Just breath very deeply the power of the Holy Ghost is going through that body of yours. It happened while I was speaking. There is another cancer healing someplace and every bit of pain has left that body. Something, I don't know what it is but something is happening in the wheelchair section is the only thing that I know. Something is happening back there - it's all over this place.

Jesus had an eternal reason for coming:

<u>1 Timothy 2:5-6</u>: (NASB) ⁵For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.

Because Jesus' reason for coming was eternal, his reason for healing was to draw attention to the magnitude of God's plan.

All of Jesus' healing was but a foretaste of the great kingdom to come:

<u>Acts 10:37-38</u>: (KJV) ³⁷That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; ³⁸How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

The Christian's perspective of what healing should mean to us:

<u>Isaiah 53:4-5</u>: (NASB) ⁴Surely our griefs he himself bore, and our sorrows he carried; yet we ourselves esteemed him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. ⁵But he was pierced through for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our wellbeing fell upon him, and by his scourging we are healed.

The healing we should be focused on is the healing of sin by being in Christ. Jesus prophesied a comprehensive healing that all will yet experience as a result of his sacrifice!



A caller from Connecticut suggests the early church needed something tangible. He always gave the glory to the Father. When he healed, he did not pass a collection plate!



(1,1) Needle better than pills, Eric Mead, The Magic of the Placebo, TedMedTalk

It turns out though, that's not even where it stops. If you have capsules they are more effective than tablets in any form. A colored capsule that's yellow on one end and red on the other is better than a white capsule. Dosage has something to do with this. One pill twice a day is not as good as three pills, I don't remember the statistic now. But the point is, these dosages have something to do with it and the form has something to do with it. And if you want the ultimate in placebo, you go to the needle. Right? A syringe with some inert couple cc's of some inert something and you inject this into a patient. Well, this is such a powerful image in their mind that it's so much stronger than the white pill. The white pill is not as good as the blue pill, is not as good as the capsule, is not as good as the needle and none of it has any real pharmaceutical quality. It's only your belief that makes it real in your body and makes a stronger effect.

Luke 5:12-14: (NASB) ¹²While he was in one of the cities, behold, there was a man covered with leprosy; and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and implored him, saying, Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean. ¹³And he stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, I am willing; be cleansed. And immediately the leprosy left him. ¹⁴And he ordered him to tell no one, but go and show yourself to the priest and make an offering for your cleansing, just as Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.

Here was an individual who wasn't necessarily a follower of Jesus, but he did have faith in the ability of Jesus to heal. Leprosy is a representation of sin in Scripture. What a great representation of the work of the ransom - the removal of sin as a result of Adam and the replacing it with new life in the kingdom of Christ! Jesus was showing what his work would accomplish in the long run for the entire world.

<u>1 Corinthians 15:22</u>: (NASB) For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

Healing will come to the world! Jesus gave us a glimpse of it because he was the deliverer, the Messiah.

(1))Janice's improvement, Placebo, Cracking the Code, Nicholas Humphrey

- (Nurse) Here's your medication for the week. Please take it every day.
 - (Nicholas) Volunteers for the antidepressant trial were split into two groups. One group was given real medication; the other a dummy, a placebo. And no one, not even the doctors, knew who was given what.
 - (Nurse) And like the doctor told you, there is a 50/50 chance that you might get a placebo or you might get an active drug.
 - (Nicholas) In fact, Janice guessed straight away.
 - (Janice) I really felt that my spirit was lifted. It made an incredible difference in my daily life. You know, just being able to drive my daughter to school and not feel teary eyed for no reason was just such a big change, and I know that my husband noticed a big difference as well.



<u>Revelation 21:3-4</u>: (NASB) ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, ⁴and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.

So, Jesus performed "grace" healing, not "faith" healing. It was meant for any whom he encountered as a sign of the kingdom to come.

Did the Apostles work their healing miracles along the same guidelines? And what about placebos - does the "placebo effect" have a place in God's plan?

(1) Janice's brain activity, Placebo, Cracking the Code, Nicholas Humphrey

- (Nicholas) After the eight-week study the doctors called her in to tell her the truth.
- (Janice) He said, "Well, you were on placebo," and I was very stunned. In fact in my heart inside, I didn't say this to him, I said inside, you're wrong, but outwardly I said, "Do you want to check that to be sure, because I really think I was on the medication." He said, "No, you were not. You were on the placebo."
- (Nicholas) But there was an even bigger revelation to come. Throughout the study the doctors had scanned Janice to see what was going on in her brain. And Janice's scans revealed that the fake antidepressant increased activity in an area at the front of the brain which regulates mood. It was a real surprise for the study's lead researcher.

Placebos do not always work. They are not predictable in any given area for any given individual. So, how can they be helpful? The principle of belief can be purposely accessed to help attack our issues.

Now the question - did the principle of faith play an important role in the healing the Apostles did?

This is a very early - perhaps the first - healing performed after Pentecost: <u>Acts 3:1-13</u>: (NASB) ¹Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer. ²And a man who had been lame from his mother's womb was being carried along, whom they used to set down every day at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, in order to beg alms of those who were entering the temple. ³When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he began asking to receive alms. ⁴But Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze on him and said, look at us! ⁵And he began to give them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. ⁶But Peter said, I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene–walk!

They were surrounded by Jews - no faith in Christianity was present in the audience. The healed individual was the most obvious cripple. He had no sign of faith either, just the hope of charity. (Note, he did not have to pay the Apostles for the healing!)

⁷And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened. ⁸With a leap he stood upright and began to walk; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. ⁹And all the people saw him walking and praising God...

There was an immediate, full and miraculous response - very public and obvious.



¹¹While he was clinging to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them at the so-called portico of Solomon, full of amazement. ¹²But when Peter saw this, he replied to the people, Men of Israel, why are you amazed at this, or why do you gaze at us, as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk? ¹³The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, the one whom you delivered and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him.

Why did Peter and John heal this person, who had no faith? It got the crowd's attention! The purpose of the healing was a witness of God's power and mercy. It provided a captivated audience for the "public" sermon to follow, introducing Jesus as the redeemer of man!

(I))Morris Cerullo, Does Faith Healing Work, History Channel

- (Narrator) In the summer of 1980, hundreds of people gathered in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to hear evangelist Morris Cerullo preach salvation and healing. They came seeking remedies for multiple sclerosis, chronic back pain, spine conditions, kidney problems, even cancer. The thousands who have attended each meeting are testimony to their belief that faith can heal.
- (Morris Cerullo) In the name of Jesus, everybody with a bone disease, everybody with a back infirmity, misplaced vertebrae, a spine disorder, swelling in your legs; everybody with that kind of a condition in the name of Jesus raise your right hand! Quickly raise it right up! All right, workers with these people here, please bring them



right down over here to the side. Ah, please help them. Help them out. Please help them out! Father, we give you praise. Please help them right out. Did you ever feel anything like this? Please, did you ever feel anything? It's like warm liquid fire flowing over this whole building. Come on! Give Him praise.

Do these examples present ANY resemblance to Jesus and the Apostles and their healing?! These sham people perform "healing" in the name of Christ, but this is not Christ's work! Jesus and the Apostles healed those who were *not* believers.

Did the Apostles ever heal those who were standing against them?

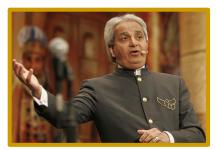
<u>Acts 16:16-19</u>: (NASB) ¹⁶It happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a slavegirl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortunetelling. ¹⁷Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, these men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation. ¹⁸She continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her! And it came out at that very moment. ¹⁹But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the authorities...

Paul immediately got into trouble for this public display of power - because it worked! Note Paul commanded *in the name of Jesus*, and not through his own power.



(2010) Benny Hinn, Raw Anointing of the Spirit (2010)

- (Benny Hinn) (Speaks to someone in the audience.) Charlotte! What's going on?
- (Charlotte) Cancer, Pastor. Cancer. All the pain is gone in his chest.
- (Benny Hinn) In the name of the Lord. Holy, holy. All the pain is gone... (indiscernible chaos- speaking while music is playing loudly).



Anyone can get so worked up with adrenalin that "the pain is gone." Of course the big question is how do you feel tomorrow and next week and next month? Why are there NO well-publicized examples of true, long lasting healing from these "healers?"

<u>Matthew 7:19-23</u>: (NASB) ¹⁹Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰So then, you will know them by their fruits. ²¹Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven will enter. ²²Many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name cast out demons, and in your name perform many miracles? ²³And then I will declare to them, I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness.

We believe this is an example of practicing lawlessness in the context of spirituality. It does not follow or fit the criteria of healing in the New Testament. We were told the miracles of the gifts of the spirit would cease because they would no longer be needed as when they first began in order to draw attention to the Gospel. The Gospel is now big enough to draw attention to itself.

Let's take another look at the placebo effect. It gives the human mind permission to refocus itself and engage in a measure of self-repair, because it removes the self-inflicted barrier of unbelief in an already difficult situation.

This effect can also work in the opposite direction:

(1) Sam Lundy and cancer, *Placebo*, *Cracking the Code*, *Nicholas Humphrey*

- (Nicholas Humphrey) Sam Lundy was a retired shoe salesman who had been diagnosed with cancer of the esophagus, the tube to the stomach. Surgeons had removed what cancer they could find, but they were convinced it would return. Sam's prospects were gloomy.
- (Doctor) In 1974, there were no survivors from esophageal cancer, so despite operations and whatever they could offer then, it was known to be literally 100 percent fatal.
- (Nicholas Humphrey) When Sam died a few weeks later, no one was very surprised. But there was a shock in store.
- (Doctor) We went for autopsy, a post mortem examination, and he, to my great surprise, had very little cancer. So, he died with cancer but not from cancer. He thought he had cancer. I thought he had cancer. Everybody around him thought he had cancer. I've kind of kicked myself through the years that maybe if I said something? Or did I remove hope from him in some way?



This placebo effect is in no way a cure all - *it is merely an expansion of an individual's previously experienced capacity to self-govern for good or bad.*

The Scriptures teach us to latch onto those things of God that give us strength to choose godliness - use the placebo effect!

<u>Isaiah 26:3</u>: (KJV) Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

This does not include a prescription drug to calm your nerves! The prescription is keeping your mind on God and His word. If we can focus on that during the turmoil in our lives, we can see the turmoil begin to affect us less. We give our mind permission, despite the difficulty, to see something differently. This is a valuable tool!

<u>Philippians 4:4-7</u>: (NASB) ⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! ⁵Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. ⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Let your mind open up to the peace of God. We were made in God's image and likely do not understand the fullness of that phrase. The ability to lock in spiritually is something better than a drug. It allows our minds to be refocused.



Observations of New Testament healing done by Jesus, the Apostles and Disciples:

- Healing done by Jesus, the Apostles and Disciples was meant for the general public.
- All healing done by Jesus, the Apostles and Disciples was in public for all to see.
- All healing was for the purpose of drawing attention to the kingdom and the Gospel of Christ.
- No money was required.

Paul himself bore the burden of infirmity throughout his Christian walk, even though he *pleaded* with Jesus for it to be removed:

<u>2 Corinthians 12:7-9</u>: (KJV) ⁷And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. ⁸For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. ⁹And he said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

This also gave the brotherhood an opportunity to help the Apostle Paul and be a part of his service. He had to rely on others. There is great value in the body of Christ working together.



Lourdes, France is where Marie Bernarde "Bernadette" Soubirous (1844 -1879) was said to have been visited by the Virgin Mary. She is venerated as a Christian mystic and saint in the Catholic Church. People have flocked to this same place for over 150 years to be healed.



Lourdes and a cure for MS placebo, Cracking the Code, Nicholas Humphrey

- Most people that are disabled do go to Lourdes expecting a miracle and sometimes there is proven fact that it has happened.
- (Nicholas Humphreys) Jean-Pierre Bely, a French anesthetist suffered from Multiple Sclerosis for 12 years. But during a visit to Lourdes in 1988, the crippling symptoms of the disease disappeared.
- (Translator for Jean-Pierre Bely) When I arrived at Lourdes I could hardly move. I did almost all the pilgrimage on a stretcher. And then a kind of warmth slowly spread up from my legs and across my whole body. This warmth got stronger and stronger and then it felt as if I'd been transported, if you like. I slid out of bed and put my feet on the ground and began to take my first faltering steps but in a very strange way, like a child who is just learning to walk.

Since the apparitions to Soubirous, Lourdes has had about 7000 cases of unexplained cures; the Catholic Church has recognized 69 cases as miraculous at this time.

Since 1970, there have been five documented cures out of about 130 million visitors - 1 in 25 million. (One has a greater chance of winning the Publisher's Clearinghouse sweepstakes ten times over than being cured here.) Do unexplainable things happen? Yes, but not only in a religious setting.

(I)) Debbie Smythe not cured, Placebo, Cracking the Code, Nicholas Humphrey

- (Nicholas Humphrey) It was the 66th official miracle recognized by Lourdes since 1882. And Debbie Smythe would love to be the 67th. She and her boyfriend Peter spent a week in Lourdes deep in prayer and deep in rituals that offer comfort and hope to thousands who attend every mass.
- (Debbie Smythe) It's like a week of freedom and being totally normal for a week. And it just gives you a new lease on life. You just forget what's wrong with you. You forget all your worries.
- (Nicholas Humphrey) But she leaves Lourdes still unable to walk unaided; a reminder that God and the placebo effect are unpredictable healers.

Faith healing venues draw on the human desire to be well, to be rid of pain and to receive something in return for showing up in faith. They build up hope, excitement and adrenaline, only to deliver an empty package of emotional letdown.



What about healing the brotherhood? What about our theme text?

<u>James 5:13-15</u>: (NASB) ¹³Is anyone among you <u>suffering</u> <2553>? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises. ¹⁴Is anyone among you <u>sick</u> <770>? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; ¹⁵and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is <u>sick</u> <2577>, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

Is any suffering: Strongs #2553 kakopatheo (kak-op-ath-eh'-o) to undergo hardship

<u>2 Timothy 4:5</u>: (KJV) But watch thou in all things, endure <u>afflictions</u> <2553>, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

Sufferings = afflictions, undergoing hardship. This person should pray to open up the human mind to accept the will and blessing of God.

Is anyone sick: Strongs #770 astheneo (as-then-eh'-o) to be feeble (in any sense)

<u>2 Corinthians 12:10</u>: (KJV) Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak <770>, then am I strong.

When anything in our lives becomes overwhelming and difficult, we feel weak and feeble. This is not just about being physically sick, but it is about being feeble in the sense that comes from everything around us.

> Wearied: Strongs #2577 kamno (kam'-no); properly, to toil, i.e. (by implication) to tire (figuratively, faint, sicken)

<u>Hebrews 12:3</u>: (KJV) For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied <2577> and faint in your minds.

<u>Revelation 2:3</u>: (KJV) And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted <2577>.

This James text really has nothing to do with physical illness; rather, it has everything to do with *spiritual* illness and being spiritually weakened by the circumstances around us. In such a state we need prayers and fellowship from our brethren. This can help heal spiritual weakness. It is in areas of spiritual sickness we should focus our belief for change!

The healing of our physical maladies is not as important as our spiritual health. When we look at the way healings were done in the days of the Apostles and Jesus, there is no similarity. As a Christian, our calling is to walk through the difficulties of life - Jesus did not have those removed - because we are following his footsteps.

<u>Revelation 2:10</u>: ... be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

So, are Christians supposed to be healed? For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions... Think about it...!

And now <u>even more</u> to think about... only in the Full Edition of CQ Rewind!



A list and some commentary on healing in the Old Testament:

(Source: http://www.voiceofhealing.info/02history/oldtestament.html) Excerpts from the article: Healing in the Old Testament

1. <u>Genesis 20:1-18</u>: Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife and his slave girls so they could have children again, for the Lord had closed up every womb in Abimelech's household because of Abraham's wife Sarah.

2. <u>Numbers 12:1-15</u>: God inflicted Miriam with leprosy and Moses interceded for her saying, O God, please heal her! Though there is no record of her healing it must be assumed that the Lord exchanged this act of judgment with the lesser penalty of seven days of disgrace outside the camp. There is no further mention of her having leprosy.

3. <u>1 Samuel 1:9-20</u>: Hannah received healing from barrenness in response to her personal prayers and Eli, the priest's declaration.

4. <u>1 Kings 13:4-6</u>: King Jeroboam pointed his hand in judgment at an unnamed prophet and it 'shriveled up.' The prophet interceded for Jeroboam and his hand was restored to health.

5. <u>1 Kings 17:17-24</u>: Elijah raised a widow's son from death.

6. <u>2 Kings 4:8-17</u>: Elisha granted a child to the formerly barren Shunnamite woman.

7. <u>2 Kings 4:18-37</u>: The Shunamite's son dies and Elisha raised him from the dead.

8. <u>2 Kings 5:1-14</u>: Naaman, commander of the King of Aram's army, was healed of leprosy after following Elisha's counsel.

9. <u>2 Kings 13:21</u>: A dead man was thrown into Elisha's tomb and contact with Elisha's bones raised the man to life.

10. <u>2 Kings 20:1-7</u>, <u>2 Chronicles 32:24-26</u>, <u>Isaiah 38:1-8</u>: Hezekiah contracted a terminal illness and prayed for healing. Isaiah received a word from God that he would live for a further 15 years. Hezekiah was healed after applying a poultice of figs to the offending 'boil.'

11. Job 42:10-17: After what some scholars believe to be nine months of serious sickness and loss, the patient and trusting Job prayed for his critical friends and was personally healed.

12. <u>Daniel 4:34, 36</u>: Nebuchadnezzar 'looked to heaven' and was healed of insanity.



In addition to these incidences of individual healing there are three occurrences of corporate healing in response to prayer:

1. <u>Numbers 16:46-50</u>: Aaron stopped the plague, which had killed 14,700 people by offering incense and making atonement for the people.

2. <u>Numbers 21:4-9</u>: The Lord sent venomous snakes among rebellious Israel. Moses prayed for them, made a bronze snake and anyone who looked at it lived.

3. <u>2 Samuel 24:10-25</u>: David sinned by counting his troops and the Lord sent a plague upon Israel, which took 70,000 lives. David built an altar, sacrificed burnt and fellowship offerings and prayed to the Lord. He answered and stopped the plague.

Finally, there were other healings from barrenness by sovereign acts of God.

- 1. Sarah Genesis 18:10,14,21:1-3 Isaac was born.
- 2. Manoah's wife Judges 13:5-25 She bore Sampson.

The above lists are all the references to specific healing in the Old Testament.

A few other instances of healing in the New Testament - these examples clearly fit into the pattern of healing the public - not believers - and healing for the sake of the Gospel being spread and not simply for the sake of healing:

<u>Acts 8:3-8</u>: (NASB) ³But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison. ⁴Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word. ⁵Philip went down to the city of Samaria and began proclaiming Christ to them. ⁶The crowds with one accord were giving attention to what was said by Philip, as they heard and saw the signs, which he was performing. ⁷For in the case of many who had unclean spirits, they were coming out of them shouting with a loud voice; and many who had been paralyzed and lame were healed. ⁸So there was much rejoicing in that city.

Same pattern! In public, for the public, and faith again is not a mentioned prerequisite.

<u>Acts 9:32-35</u>: (NASB) ³²Now as Peter was traveling through all those regions, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda. ³³There he found a man (note - not a believer) named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years, for he was paralyzed.

Note the unquestionable seriousness of both healing events!

³⁴Peter said to him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; get up and make your bed." Immediately he got up. ³⁵And all who lived at Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord. (NOT Peter)

Note the PUBLIC NATURE of the healing event! - Note that the man's faith was not a factor and note that this act of healing turned the public to Jesus...



Peter at Solomon's Portico: Stunning miracles in the face of dire opposition!

<u>Acts 5:14-20</u>: (NASB) ¹⁴And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to their number, ¹⁵to such an extent that they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and pallets, so that when Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on any one of them. ¹⁶Also the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, bringing people who were sick or afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all being healed. ¹⁷But the high priest rose up, along with all his associates (that is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with jealousy. ¹⁸They laid hands on the apostles and put them in a public jail. ¹⁹But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the gates of the prison, and taking them out he said, ²⁰Go, stand and speak to the people in the temple the whole message of this Life.

Again, faith is not a factor. Notice the massive public flocking to the healing! You only get that when word gets out.