



# Healing and the Character of God

The character of God can be seen in the things He does. Psalm 103:2-5 attests to God's great mercy which includes forgiveness of sin and the healing of all our diseases. Some have speculated that the term "healing," when used by Bible authors, exclusively means spiritual wholeness or emotional health. However, it is important to note the specific words used are promises of literal physical healing from diseases. Some of these words will be discussed in this and the next three lessons.



It is also important to notice that the healing power of God is demonstrated in people as a fulfillment of His promise to believers of every generation.

Through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, we were made complete (Isaiah 53:5 and 1 Peter 2:24). These verses indicate that the promised healing would include spiritual, physical, and emotional health. Divine healing is more than the benevolent touch of God; it is a basic part of our relationship with Jesus Christ (Matthew 8:16-17). We do not have to wonder if God is capable of healing or if He will provide healing because our relationship with Jesus Christ includes the benefit of praying for and receiving healing.

## Overview

God desires physical, spiritual, and emotional wholeness for His people. When God revealed this part of His character, He used the name, *Yahweh-Rapha*, which means, "*The Lord our Healer*" (Exodus 15:26). God guarantees His permanent promises with His Name. The examples given in this lesson demonstrate that healing is as real today as salvation. The Lord wants to save and heal people in every age (Mark 16:15-18).

Some argue that God no longer heals people. This theory is not biblically supported. In God's plan for healing, it is impossible to separate spiritual, physical, and emotional wholeness. Jesus gives equal significance to forgiving sin and to healing sickness (Matthew 9:5-6), thus fulfilling God's original promise in Luke 4:18-21. He continues to heal people as Christians take the truth of God's promise to others (Acts 4:29-30).

This lesson will direct the Christian to the fact that the Lord desires every believer to pray for the sick and see them recover. The Bible gives specific guidelines for applying the promise of divine healing. Our minds must be open to the truth of God's Word. Our hearts must be convinced that God cares enough about us that He wants to heal us. We need to believe that God really desires to make us and those we pray for well.

# DECLARATION OF FAITH

*We believe that Divine Healing is the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to heal the sick and afflicted in answer to believing prayer; that He who is the same yesterday, today and forever has never changed, but is still an all-sufficient help in the time of trouble, able to meet the needs of, and quicken into newness of life the body, as well as the soul and spirit in answer to the faith of them who ever pray with submission to His divine and sovereign will.*

- Aimee Semple McPherson,  
Founder ICFG



## GOD'S DESIRE TO HEAL

In each example below, we discover a lasting promise which reflects the character of God. Notice that the Hebrew name for God, is complemented with the specific title (Yahweh-Rapha), which establishes the promise. Each example includes a Bible verse and a condition for the promise.

### **Yahweh-Shalom – Judges 6:24-28**

“The Lord our peace” told Gideon to boldly destroy the altar of a pagan god worshipped by his family.

### **Yahweh-Ra’ah – Psalm 23:1-2**

“The Lord our Shepherd” requires us to completely trust in Him and His direction for our daily lives.

### **Yahweh-Jireh – Genesis 22:12-14**

“The Lord our Provider” wants us to be willing to do what He says at any personal cost.

Throughout time, God has never ceased to be what these names reveal. He continues to be our Peace, our Shepherd and our Provider. Jesus, the Son of God, whose nature is identical to that of God the Father, continues to be “our Healer” as recorded in the Gospels (see Lesson 10).

## GOD'S PROMISE TO HEAL

God is concerned about the well-being of His people. In Exodus 15:22-26, the children of Israel had been wandering through the desert for three days and were in need of water. God tested His people to see if they would depend on Him for help. They found water in Marah, but the water was not drinkable. Moses obeyed God's instruction, and God miraculously made the water

God's promises never cease because they reveal the very nature of God, who never changes. God does what He does because of who He is. Exodus 15:26 records an incident when God made a promise to His people which was directly linked to His name. He called Himself, *Yahweh-Rapha*, which means the *Lord Who Heals*. This promise reflects God's desire to heal His people. By using His Name in these promises, God demonstrates His desire to see them continue throughout all time. While the promises are connected to God's righteous character, there are always conditions which accompany the promises.

safe to drink. God told His people that He would always make provision for their health and would provide every need if they would simply trust Him and obey His instructions. God promised to be their healer, if they would promise to obey Him.

## GOD'S CONDITIONS FOR HEALING

God continues to heal today. In many cases of God's healing in the Bible, something was required of the person who desired healing. This condition did not in itself bring about the healing, but the obedience demonstrated the person's dependence upon God for his or her healing. In the Old Testament, Naaman, the leper, had to humble himself and wash in the Jordan River seven times. This was not easy for a prideful military leader. Yet, when he obeyed, he was healed. In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul ministered healing in Jesus' Name, to a lame man. The instructions were simple, except for a man born without the use of his legs. Paul said, “stand up on your feet!” Of course, God had already healed the man, but as he stood the genuineness of his healing was powerfully exhibited.

In some cases nothing was required of the person who was healed. Jesus simply healed that person because of His tremendous compassion and sovereign will (Matthew 8:14-15; Luke 7:11-16; 13:10-13). God's compassion for a hurting humanity has not decreased. Even sometimes when we do not meet the requirements for healing, the Lord in His great goodness still heals.

For Christians today, the conditions for healing center on obedience to the Bible and a sincere desire to see God fulfill His promise in their lives. Read James 5:13-16, and spend a few minutes discussing the following questions to discover how we can enjoy the full benefit of God's healing in our lives.



# Personal Response

James 5:13 tells us that people can receive healing by praying for themselves. The Bible uses the word, "afflicted," which can cover many physical ailments and emotional conditions. How has God brought healing when you have prayed for His touch?

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James 5:14-15 instructs Christians to call for the elders of the church who will agree in prayer with them for God's deliverance, wholeness, and healing. It is important to notice that Christians can pray for their own healing, and calling for the elders is simply a point of agreement in faith when extra support is needed.

Whose responsibility is it to ask for prayer during illness? \_\_\_\_\_

What two responses will a person receive from the elders? \_\_\_\_\_

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## HEART PERSPECTIVE

James 5:16 exhorts Christians to deal with personal issues that, if not handled, may cause emotional or physical illness. The Bible tells us to confess our sins with other Christians that we may be healed.

Name some sins that, if left unconfessed, could cause physical or emotional illness: \_\_\_\_\_

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How can confessing our sin to one another bring the healing of Jesus into our lives? \_\_\_\_\_

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Jesus said, "These signs will follow them that believe: In My Name they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover" (Mark 16:17-18). This passage states that those who truly believe will be able to touch another person, in Jesus' Name, and the person will be healed. Sometimes we think that we have to use religious language or the right prayer if we want to see God's healing. These verses indicate that an appropriate touch, such as joining hands or a hand on a shoulder, can result in healing. When a Christian touches people who need healing in Jesus' Name, it is as if Jesus Himself touches and heals them.



## Lesson 9 Teaching Outline



# Healing and the Character of God

## 1 REFERENCE POINT

(15 minutes)

Write these categories on the chalkboard: "EMOTIONAL," "PHYSICAL," "SPIRITUAL." Ask a volunteer to read Isaiah 53:5 and 1 Peter 2:24. Now ask the students to share words or phrases from these verses which indicate healing/wholeness under one of these categories. As they suggest specific words, write these words under the appropriate heading. Discuss the fact that God is concerned about the entire person. He is most concerned with our spiritual wholeness because this is an eternal issue. However, God certainly cares that His people have emotional and physical health as well. To limit God to one or two of these categories of healing, is to discredit His eternal ministry and deep love for people.

## 2 OVERVIEW

(15 minutes)

Ask the students to form groups of three or four and consider these questions: What reaction would you have to the news that you or a loved one faced an incurable disease? What emotions would you experience? What words would you express? Within the groups, ask students to assume the role of doctor, patient, pastor, extended family and role play the various reactions to this scenario.

After a few minutes ask the following questions:

- Were you surprised at the emotions expressed?
- How did your relationship with Jesus affect your reaction?
- Is God capable of healing today?

## 3 INSIGHT

(20 minutes)

As you prepare to teach this lesson, focus on these points:

- Divine healing is connected with the character of God.
- God's character is unchangable.
- God cares and is compassionate.
- Jesus affirmed the covenant of healing in His earthly ministry.
- The New Testament extends healing into the present day church.
- Christians should obey God's Word to receive the full benefit of His promise of healing.
- Sometimes God heals just because He is good and compassionate.

## TAKING IT HOME

### PERSONAL RESPONSE (Conclusion, 10 minutes)

Christians can pray for themselves and others. Calling on the elders of the church to pray with other Christians provides a built-in network of support in times of need. Help the students recognize their own ability through the Holy Spirit to pray for and expect God's healing touch.

### HEART PERSPECTIVE (Personal Devotions)

The fulness of God's provision of healing requires Christians to confess sin to God. There are times when it is appropriate to confess our failures to other Christians. Encourage students to deal with personal sin and failures which might have negative physical, emotional, or spiritual effects if they are not dealt with.

### FAITH SHARING (Follow-Up)

Point out to the students the fact that we can share our faith in Christ through an appropriate touch on the shoulder or joined hands; words are not always necessary to convey the love and compassion of God to others.