

WHAT IS CHRISTIAN HEALING?

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What is Christian healing? That is a question that is often asked and has many answers. The answer is simple. It is asking Jesus Christ what to do about any disease, trauma or affliction. It includes others praying for you for both physical and inner healing. Then, listening and doing so that He might bring wholeness from the inside out. It is not a process of magic whereby we get God to do what we ask.

Christian Healing is the manifestation of the creative power of God's love as He comes to make us a new creation in Christ Jesus. It is concerned not only with the stewardship of our body, of flesh and blood, but also our mind and our heart. It is concerned with our ultimate relationship with God as our Father, Jesus Christ as our Savior and Healer, and Holy Spirit, as the Executive of Father's love for us as He revealed it to us in Jesus Christ.

It is not simply the maintenance of life in this world. It is the growing edge of God's creation where the Kingdom of God encounters the old creation and brings about transformation as well as restoration. The purpose of Christian Healing is to grant us entry into the Kingdom now, that we might live in the world, but not of the world. It is our invitation and access to God's Kingdom and the wholeness He has prepared for us.

Since we have a two-way street of, 'How do we receive Christian Healing?' and 'How do we minister Christian Healing?', we will have to look a little closer at 'asking Jesus what to do'.

HOW DO WE RECEIVE CHRISTIAN HEALING?

God is not into magic, and Christian Healing does not use incantation. He is into creation through the manifestation of His love. He calls us to Himself. Healing begins when we knowingly seek Him as He reveals Himself to us, and as we ask Jesus to reveal to us what has been driving our behavior. These revelations will always be in accord with the revelation that He has already shown us in His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

The diagnostic questions are simple. Do I know God? If I do not know Him well enough to talk with Him, I need spiritual healing or spiritual training. How many of us have taken the time to ask Jesus what is going on in our lives and then wait for an answer? How many of us have entered into conversation with Jesus as opposed to presenting God with a long litany of what we need done? Can I accept and forgive myself and others? If not, I need healing of the heart and soul. Do I think the Kingdom of God is present? If not, I need healing of the mind. Am I a member of a community of likeminded people? If not, I need to become a member of a community where Jesus Christ is the Center. Can I forgive and receive forgiveness? If not, then I need to seek help from trained prayer ministers in receiving and in forgiving.

The receiving of Christian Healing is simply to ask our Lord Jesus to lead you to the community in which He intends you to share, and to the persons in the community through whom He will minister to you. Ask the people to whom He sends you to pray for you; and be willing to receive the healing on His terms. If you are willing to ask, the door will be opened to a way for you to find what you are seeking from Him. It may not always be what you expect, but He will act in your life. When the asking is done, be still and listen to what He wants for you.



It is important to pursue healing from one area to another. From time to time, the disease or trauma that we find in our minds and bodies is connected to a source that needs healing in the heart or soul. Many of them might stem from our inability to forgive or seek forgiveness. Perhaps the most difficult task is to forgive ourselves.

When faced with a serious issue of any kind, it might be well to begin with a confession of our sins to God so we might receive His forgiveness and begin our prayers with a clean heart. Then we might make a list of the people we need to forgive, beginning with God and ourselves. To forgive God does not mean that He has done something amiss. He has just not lived up to our expectations. It is simply a reaffirmation that we are willing to accept God as He has revealed Himself rather than as we had apprehended Him initially.

When we are unable to forgive someone, we might ask God to forgive them through us so that we might get in on His love and forgiveness for the person. It is always well to remember that forgiveness is not forgetting. If someone abuses us, we can forgive them, but we must not put ourselves into a position of continuing to be abused (For a more detailed discussion of forgiveness, see other OSL resources on forgiveness.)

HOW DO WE MINISTER CHRISTIAN HEALING?

Jesus gave us six, “Go and Do” Commissions which define the realm of healing as Christians. The first three are found in His commission to the disciples when He sent them out. He first gave them authority and power, and then sent them to, “Proclaim the Kingdom of God, to Heal the Sick and to Cast Out Demons”.

The proclamation of the Kingdom is not simply a proclamation about the future. The Kingdom of God is at hand, and the King can be known. He is known now in part, but He is known. We can be reconciled to the One who created us, who loves us, and who has prepared the Way for us to live with Him as His children. That reconciliation opens the way for the healing of the spirit. It is the access we have, to determining who we are and why we are here. It is the primary source of deliverance from lost-ness, loneliness, and stress.

Prayer is no longer talking at God. It becomes talking with God. It is the encounter wherein we transact the trade of our disease or trauma of spirit for His grace and peace in our lives. Christian healing begins when we can assist people to connect with the author of creation who alone can bring wholeness to us now. It is perhaps the great difference between Christian Healing and other alternatives.

In the final analysis it means to set people free from the seven deadly sins of pride, envy, anger, sloth, avarice, gluttony and lust; so they might become the garden of God; bearing the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, kindness, faithfulness, humility and self control. It means the exchange of the character of Adam for the character of Jesus. It is the resolution of the stresses that plague our lives, and it enables us to live with ourselves as we learn to live with God

The healing of the sick has to do with the finding and fulfilling of vocation, the purpose for which God has created us and to which He has called us. It is not simply a matter of rising and walking. It is a matter of walking with God in accord with His purpose for us. It is concerned with finding and walking with Him.

The healing process equips us physically to walk in the purpose He has given us. It brings us to a freedom, strength and the grace to become His, and to work with Him.

The next two commissions are given following the resurrection. Matthew 28:18-20 (ESV)

18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”



The commission to teach is for the healing of the mind. If we look at the Gospels, we might be struck by the teaching about the Kingdom of God, while He was doing the work of healing. He told us, in effect, that we are to think Kingdom, not human limitations. We are to think solution and not problems. When we ask God what the solution is to be, He might not come up with the same one we have in mind, but He does not leave us alone, and we are never without Hope. He is with us always.

Perhaps we might say that our minds and our thinking are healed when we encounter a crisis and immediately think prayer rather than how we are going to work it out ourselves. Prayer has been put down over the past few decades, but it is our communication line with both the wisdom and power of God. Think Kingdom!

Making disciples has always been about the idea of saving souls, but it is also about the healing of the community. It is not simply bringing souls out of hell into heaven. It is bringing souls into communion with God and with one another. There is no provision in the New Testament for individual Christians. It is individual in community. The community is the Body of which Jesus Christ is the Head, and all His disciples are members. Romans 12:5 (ESV) 5 so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

In the final analysis, none of us can achieve wholeness apart from the rest of the Body which Jesus is preparing for the Kingdom of God. There is no way we can practice love apart from others. There must be giving and someone who is receiving for love to become a reality. The intimacy to which we are called by God is to be practiced in the community of Jesus' disciples - those who know that they are loved infinitely and unconditionally and can share that same unconditional love with others.

The final commission is, John 20:21-23 (ESV) 21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

We are sent to forgive. We are sent to heal relationships with others as well as with God. In the context of the community we are taught by James, James 5:14-16 (ESV) 14 "Is anyone among you sick? 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. 15 And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. 16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working".

Confession comes in a variety of forms in church traditions, but it does not come as an option. It is a necessity for maintaining an open relationship with God and with other people. Forgiving ourselves and others is also essential to the flow of God's healing love and power into our own lives, as well as through our lives for the lives of those to whom He sends us to minister.

These commissions embody the fullness of Christian Healing. It begins with establishing a living relationship with a living God, who wants us to know Him as Abba. It continues with the nurture of that relationship in prayer and worship, individually and corporately. It extends to our soul and the enabling grace to know and accept ourselves as God knows us and loves us. It incorporates the changes that grace imparts as God makes us a new creation, preparing us to enter more fully into His Kingdom. It works out the extension of these healings into the body that we might be prepared to know and fulfill the purpose of our creation. It enables us to think in terms of the Kingdom of God being present, and the authority and power of the King being available as we pray, "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done - nothing more, nothing less, nothing else"

WHAT ABOUT USE OF MEDICAL CARE, DIET AND EXERCISE?

Medicine and Counsel work from the outside in. Doctors treat; God heals. We are not to avoid external treatment; we are to use it as we are led, prayerfully offering the physicians and treatments to God for His use. We trust God to use the physician of the body or the psyche to prepare us for His love to restore us to the wholeness He intends for us to use in our vocation.

When any medical procedure or treatment is used, seek God's direction in whom you are to contact, commit the doctors, nurses and all medication and treatment to Him, and let Him fill in the bottom line.



Diet is important to our physical well being. Since God has not made two of us alike, there is no specific regimen to which we must adhere; but it is essential that our food intake be balanced and in accord with our body's capacity to metabolize it. While it is not a fetish to hang around our necks, it is important to have a sensible diet that does not fall on either side of gluttony - starvation or over eating.

Exercise is essential to maintain normal health. It is especially necessary for those who are subject to high stress. Stress that dumps adrenaline into the cardio-vascular system allows fat molecules to enter also. They must either be burned out through exercise or settle out causing cardiovascular problems with circulation. The obvious solution is not simply exercise, but the working toward the elimination of the stress through the healing power of God's love.

Christian Healing is found in the context of a community of people who share two things - the needs over which they have no power, and the grace that God has given them in Jesus Christ to share in their corporate lives. The healing power of forgiveness is operative in that community to assure relationships are kept open to the flow of the love of God - that heals the spirit, soul, body, mind, community and relationships.

