

# Health and Healing

....enjoying the powers of  
the age to come.

Peter Michell

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**Enigmatic, puzzling, confusing** - what other adjective would you use for our understanding of divine healing?

Of all the teaching materials listed on the previous page this is probably the most difficult subject. I don't confess to know all the answers – so what we have here is limited to my study, understanding and experience.

Nevertheless, I am certain it will bring a significant degree of clarity and understanding for those who work through it diligently.

**The title** comes from the letter to the Hebrews (6:4-6) where the writer is moving on from the elementary principles:

*'For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, whilst (since) they crucify again for themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.'*

The letter is written to Jews, who having become Christians, are suffering persecution from fellow Jews who are, or who are in danger of, turning back to Judaism.

The passage is not connected with eternal salvation – rather it is about fruitfulness. We see that clearly in the next two verses ( 7-8):

*'For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, received blessing from God; but if it bears thorns and briers, it is rejected and near to being cursed (but not cursed), whose end is to be burned.'*

It is not about eternal salvation because born again believers have the Holy Spirit dwelling inside the born again human spirit and that which is born of God cannot sin. ( 1 John 3:9)

The passage shows it is the 'fruit' of the land that is destroyed – that represents the believer's works. We know from 1 Corinthians 3:13-15 that all our works are tested by fire – whilst we ourselves are saved.

The wonder of God's grace is that we can, and we all do or should, repent\* when we become aware of missing the mark of God's goodness and holiness in our actions.

\* Repent meaning change direction – stop the wrong, unrighteous, course and choose righteousness.

The writer to the Hebrews was telling them they could not be restored again, enjoying the powers of the age to come, whilst they were unrepentant. (Having fallen away from the gospel of grace and moving back towards legalism.)

1 John 1:9 confirms that repentance, by confession of sins, is effective for full restoration, cleansing us from all unrighteousness.

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# 1 The powers of the age to come.

**What does the scripture mean by ‘the age to come?’**

*‘For behold I create a new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people. The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying.’* Isaiah 65:17-19.

The passage goes on to describe some of the features of this coming age – the wolf and lamb will lie together. The lion shall eat straw like the ox. Chapter 11 adds *‘the nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole and the weaned child shall put his hand in the vipers den. They shall not hurt nor destroy on My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.’*

Revelation 21 and 22 add more description of this wonderful age yet to come when the New Jerusalem is here and the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

*'And he showed me a pure river of water of life, as clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore 12 fruits, each tree bearing its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.'*

Revelation 22:1-2.

### **When is this age to come - 1?**

Now we have to turn to Revelation 19. Here we read of a period of 1,000 years when Jesus reigns on earth personally. In this period our enemy, satan, can have no influence for he is bound and consigned to what the scripture describes as 'the bottomless pit.'

Before this age can start the wrath of God is poured out on the earth. Mankind is given time and opportunity to repent – many do. We call this period the Great Tribulation.

The return of Jesus to the earth together with His bride (now described as the armies of heaven) ends the Great Tribulation and His Kingdom will now be established. Survivors of the tribulation period are separated in to sheep (those who have come to believe in Jesus for salvation during this period) and goats (unbelievers.) Goats are sent away into everlasting punishment.

### **When is this age to come - 2?**

Soon!

Refer to the booklet, 'The King is coming.'

## **There are differing views regarding the 'end times.'**

For the purposes of our discussion here it is only necessary to believe that there is an age to come. A perfect age in which all the power of heaven can freely operate. An age we have seen some scripture describe – and there are many other verses that could be quoted.

It's a miraculous age. An age so fruitful that *'the time comes when the plowman overtakes the reaper.'* Amos 9:13

The Hebrews were in danger - they had experienced the Holy Spirit and the powers of the age to come but were in danger of falling away by turning back to Law. Whilst they continued down that path it was impossible to renew them until they repented and renewed their belief in the efficacy of Jesus sacrifice and the wonder of completely unmerited grace.

## 2 What was achieved on the cross.

### **Mankind in a hopeless mess**

Ever since Adam had introduced sin into the world, through his choice to disobey the Lord by consuming the one forbidden fruit, sin has multiplied. God's holiness and righteous judgement required a way of atonement\* for man's sin.

\* - a settling of the due penalty.

### **The certificate of debt.**

Man's sin accumulated on both a personal and a national level. The list had become long and burdensome. God had to find a way to restore the fellowship with man that He longed for. Death is the consequence of sin and from Adam sin spread to all mankind because all sin.

*Jesus dealt with it – 'You being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the certificate of debt that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.'*

Colossians 2:13-14

## Job done

The prophet Isaiah has more detail of the wonderful achievement of the acceptable sacrifice of Jesus life.

*‘Surely He has born our griefs (literally sicknesses and diseases) and carried our sorrows (literally pains); yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.’*

Isaiah 53:4-6

In ‘legal’ and in ‘righteousness’ terms He has done everything necessary and according to the apostle Peter ( Second letter 1:3) has given us all we need for life and Godliness.

The penalty due for our sin has been paid by Him.  
He has carried away our sicknesses and diseases.  
He has carried our pains.  
We are healed.

So now we need to go deeper and understand just how all that Jesus achieved on the cross comes into our reality and our experience here on earth.

### **3 Tripartite salvation.**

**Salvation ('*soteria*') means deliverance from danger.**

**Tripartite means consisting of three parts.**

*'Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.'* 1 Thessalonians 5:23

#### **Salvation of your spirit.**

The deliverance of the human spirit from danger is the first, and arguably, the most important step as it is effective for all eternity.

Mankind was created in the image of God and God is Spirit.  
(Genesis 1:26 and John 4:24)

The breath of life (spirit) was breathed into clay and man was thus created – Adam.

Adam was given all the garden of Eden but was warned about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and instructed not to eat its fruit. Genesis 2:17. Adam was warned the day you eat of that

fruit 'dying you will die.' ('die' in the Hebrew text is doubled - 'you will die die')

Adam's death was both instant and eventual – instant in that his human spirit immediately died\* and eventual in that finally his body and soul would also die. - 'Dying you will die.'

(\* Was transferred from the realm of life to the realm of death.)

And it is from this understanding – that the human spirit died – that Paul makes it clear - in Adam we all died. (Romans chapter 5) and Jesus makes it very clear that we must be born again.

Jesus is emphatic - flesh gives birth to flesh and Spirit to spirit. Our human parents give birth to our flesh but only the Holy Spirit can give rebirth to our human spirit. – You must be born again.

(John chapter 3)

We are born again when we believe that God gave His only begotten Son so that by believing (placing our personal trust) in Him we have eternal life. (John 3:16-19) The rest of scripture will fill in the details, that is why God gave His Son, and what His Son accomplished for us who believe.

This aspect of our salvation is guaranteed - Ephesians 1:13-14, 4:30, 2 Corinthians 1:22, 5:5, Hebrews 13:5, 2 Timothy 2:13  
This is so because the born again human spirit is indwelt by the Holy Spirit and is incapable of sin. 1 John 3:9, John 20:22, John 14:17.

## **Salvation of the soul**

*'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.'*

Philippians 2:12

Paul cannot be referring to the salvation of the spirit - he has already declared that our salvation is guaranteed. So, here he must be referring to what the bible refers to as flesh. For clarity we need to define flesh – biblically it is used to mean body or soul or both together.

## **Salvation of the body**

The salvation of the body is included in the quotation Philippians 2:12. We will go on to deal with some aspects in the following pages.

In addition the scripture gives a wonderful promise –

*'Behold I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed – in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.'*

1 Corinthians 15:51-53

Healing is all about the deliverance from danger of the soul and of the body - so in the following chapters we will be going into detail of how this is worked out.

## 4 Spirit filled living.

The disciples received the Holy Spirit when the risen Jesus breathed on them and commanded, *'receive the Holy Spirit.'*

John 20:22

This was a new development, up to this point there was the promise that the Holy Spirit would *'dwell with you and will be in you.'* John 14:17

(The scripture previously stated that the Holy Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet [at that point] glorified. John 7:39)

So we see the promise fulfilled, they received the Spirit in chapter 20, and yet were later told to stay in Jerusalem until they received the Promise of the Father. (Acts 1:4)

There was more to come!

*'For John truly baptised with water, but you shall be baptised with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.'* *'But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you shall be*

*witness to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.'* Acts 1:5 and 8

The immediate evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was speaking in tongues. Then the disciples also moved in other gifts and people were healed and demons dismissed.

The scene was now set for the promise of Jesus to be fulfilled:

*'Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also, and greater works than these he will do because I go to My Father.'* John 14:12

For: 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' John 7:38

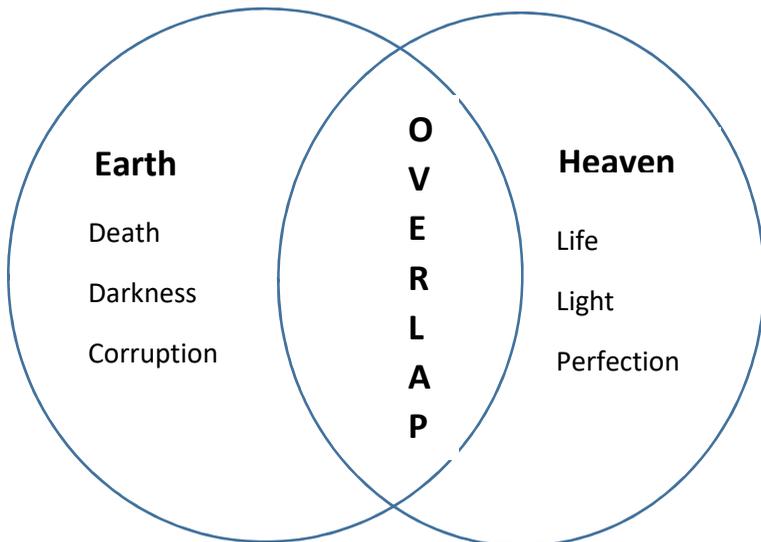
For us then – be baptised in the Holy Spirit, speak with other tongues, heal the sick, drive out demons just as Jesus commanded in Mark 16:15-18.

For healing, health and power we need to receive the Promise of the Father and be baptised in the Holy Spirit.

## 5 Life in the overlap

We live our day to day lives and it becomes apparent that it's not straightforward because .....

Now we need to appreciate the Kingdoms or realms:



At salvation we were transferred from death to life, from darkness to light – utterly true of our indwelt human spirit which right now dwells entirely in the heavenly realm, seated with Christ.

However, our flesh remains in the area designated as ‘overlap.’ Those who are not born again are dwelling entirely in the realm of death and darkness and can not appreciate the Kingdom of Heaven at all.

We who are born again can appreciate the Kingdom of Heaven, though we often fall short of enjoying all its benefits.

We live in a battleground – where death and darkness are trying to pull us back into their realm while the Holy Spirit is drawing us further and further into light and life, changing us from one degree of glory to another.

## **Choice**

This is where the choices we make are vitally important. Paul puts it like this: *‘that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind and that you put on the new man which was created by God, in true righteousness and holiness.’* Ephesians 4:22-24.

And to the Galatians (5:16-17) *‘I say then, walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh.’*

There is a tug of war going on and we are urged to pull on the side of righteousness. Choices, choices, choices - day by day working

out the salvation of our souls and bodies until the final victory of full promotion to heaven to be with Him.

## 6 As He is so are we in this world

**Here, in the realm of the overlap (that we have just described), we are called to be like Him.**

*‘Love has been perfected among us in this; that we may have boldness in the day of judgement; because as He is so are we in this world.’*  
1 John 4:17

There are two important statements incorporated in this one verse - ‘boldness in the day of judgement.’ Everyone will appear before the throne of God – for us that should not be a daunting prospect, unless we have lived a fruitless and selfish life – that will be forgiven but we are unlikely to be coming boldly.

The second statement is the one we want for this study - ‘as He is so are we in this world.’

This resonates with Jesus statement, *‘Most assuredly I say to you. He who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.’*

John 14:12

How is this to come about? –

*‘I will pray the Father and He will give you another Helper (another of the same type - i.e. like Me, Jesus) that He may abide with you*

*forever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him, but you know Him for He dwells with you and will be in you.’ (‘in you’ was fulfilled in chapter 20:22 when Jesus breathed on the disciples.)*

John 14:16-7

As we see Jesus moving in power so that same power is available to us:

*Paul prays, ‘that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory; may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power towards us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.’*

Ephesians 1:17-20

So having established that we are called to be like Jesus in this world, and that we are empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit to be so, we now need to move on to see how it will come about.

## 7 Jesus healed as He did what He saw His Father doing.

**Jesus had strategy for the things He did.**

*‘The Jesus answered and said to them, Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.’* John 5:19

### **Seeing what the Father is doing**

Immediately after His baptism Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Spirit – there He faced testing from satan.

Three challenges were thrown at Jesus –

*‘If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread?’* After 40 days and nights of fasting Jesus was hungry. Jesus replied, *‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’*

(word here is in Greek ‘*rhema*,’ which has the meaning of ‘little phrase or saying’ – Jesus is saying, in the present tense, man does

not live by bread alone but by the specific words God is saying now in the present moment.)

Here Jesus' reply to satan is a scripture (Deuteronomy 8:3) spoken to Him by the Father at that very moment.

The other two challenges are dealt with by Jesus in the same way.

This is the point - Jesus said, of Himself the Son can do nothing, but what He sees the Father doing. Can we expect to do things any other way? As we are called to be like Him, clearly not!

### **The Son does in 'like manner'**

In John 5:19 we have this statement about strategy – Jesus did things the way He saw the Father working.

We can see this working out in the way Jesus restored sight to the blind.

Matthew 9:27            Two blind men followed Him crying out, calling Him the Son of David. (An acknowledgement that He is the Messiah). He asked them, 'Do you believe I am able to do this.' 'Yes Lord.' He touched their eyes, according to your faith let it be to you.

Mark 8:22            They brought a blind man to Him and begged Him to touch him. Jesus took the blind man out of town, and when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything. 'I see men like trees walking.' He put His hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everything clearly.

Mark 10: 46-52            Blind Bartimaeus is told to go his way and as he went he was healed.

John 9:1                    A man blind from birth has his sight restored. This time Jesus makes clay with His spittle and anointed the man's eyes with it. 'Go wash in the pool of Siloam,' - he went, washed and came back seeing.

Jesus is recorded to have restored the sight of many people - here we can see that He did what He saw the Father doing - Jesus did it in like manner – using the Father's strategy.

There is no 'this is how it worked last time, so we do the same,' or 'this is how it worked for that church so we will copy!'

As He is so are we in this world – so we follow His example and are to do what we see the Father doing, which will be revealed to us by the Holy Spirit.

## 8 Understanding truth is vital.

Jesus understood truth because of who He is, *'I am the way, the truth, and the life.'* John 14:6

The Holy Spirit (who indwells us) is described as, *'the Spirit of truth.'* John 14:7

We have a problem. We do not automatically understand truth. We have to be led into truth by the Holy Spirit. (Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would guide us into all truth in John 16:13.)

So our problem has a solution! The solution is worked out over time – not all at once but bit by bit.

### **Paul writing to Timothy ( Second letter 2:15, 3:16 and 17)**

*Scripture is given so that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*

*Be diligent to present yourself to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

So:

- 1 Agree with the Lord - all scripture is God breathed through men and is not to be of any private interpretation. (2 Peter 1:20-1)
- 2 It is necessary to spend time in study, praying to be led into all truth.
- 3 It is the job of the Holy Spirit to bring understanding and revelation as we do.
- 4 Scripture has to be rightly divided – that means understanding that God spoke to Israel in a particular way, to mark them out as His special people. Much of what is said to Israel does not apply under the New Covenant, so don't get caught up trying to keep the Law.
- 5 Recognise - you need a good understanding of truth to be 'thoroughly equipped.'
- 6 Avoid any action or position in life which contradicts scripture.

**Helpful frequent prayer**, - 'Holy Spirit please lead me into all truth.' As it is the declared role of the Holy Spirit, this prayer, which shows our agreement and our desire, is bound to be answered. More and more, day by day.

**Helpful process** - Biblical meditation. By taking a verse of scripture and, in a quiet place, repeating the verse to oneself, preferably out loud and many times over, the truth of the scripture will deeply ingrain itself within us. Psalm 4:4 – '*meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still.*'

Use scriptures which counteract your doubts and or which build up trust in the Lord.

## 9 Step up

### Throw off reluctance

Many born again believers are often reluctant to ‘bother God.’ This comes about either by a feeling of unworthiness, or a feeling that the issue is too small, or unbelief. But scripture is adamant –

*‘Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.’* Hebrews 4:16

The context of the invitation is the writer’s statement, that in Jesus we have a High Priest who sympathizes with our weaknesses. Jesus has accomplished everything that is needed – *‘His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue.’*

2 Peter 1:2

### **Boldly**

Boldly because we know we are the beloved children for whom Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice. Boldly not brashly! We come to the throne of grace as those who love the Lord, with all their heart, all their soul, all their mind and all their strength, knowing that the Lord God is a loving Father.

## **Grace**

We are not coming demanding 'rights' but seeking the kindness and goodness of God in grace and mercy – seeking His strategy. *'Those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.'*

Romans 5:17

## **In time of need**

The scripture goes some way to defining 'in times of need.' In James 4:3 we are told, *'you ask and you do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend on your pleasures.'*

Coming to God in prayer is not a question of, 'Lord give me this or that - a bigger house, a faster car, more money.'

*'Therefore do not worry saying 'what shall we eat, what shall we drink, what shall we wear. For after all these things the Gentiles seek, For you Heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.'* Matthew 6:31-33

So prayer at the throne of grace can be likened to speaking with a loving Father. Step up - the Father wants your company.

## 10 No stomping

**Stomping - treading heavily and noisily.**

We have observed, and been involved with fellowships, where prayer sometimes becomes telling God what He has to do. Usually this is loud and noisy - and totally ineffective!

The practice is based on taking certain scriptures, such as 'Jesus healed all who came to Him,' and proclaiming loudly and with much repetition scriptures such as, 'by His stripes we are healed.'

Regretfully we have seen this type of thing many times. As the practice has no scriptural basis it does not work.\* We have seen the person not healed then blamed for the failure - you must be in sin, or you don't have faith - i.e. it's your fault.

\* God is the ultimate in grace. So one has to allow that very occasionally God will seem to respond - though usually there is another factor that comes into play. For example we know of this testimony, - a person who continually repeated 'By His stripes I am healed,' did receive healing - but it came when God spoke to them specifically - thus releasing faith, as faith comes by hearing God speak.

## **Maturity**

We are called to maturity. The mature believer knows that you cannot twist God's arm in any way. Maturity recognises that Jesus paid the price for our healing which is then received into our experience by the strategy that God gives, by grace and through the Holy Spirit, when we ask Him.

The mature believer knows to come to the Father at His throne of grace to make supplication there, in the certain knowledge that the Father listens; and in the certain knowledge that the Father has his or her best interests in mind. Maturity leaves the answer in God's hands – He may give strategy there and then, He may just move in and solve the problem. We also need to acknowledge that God may choose to do nothing at that time – letting patience do its perfect work within us.

*'Imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.'*

Hebrews 6:12

## 11 God speaks

In the last chapter we touched on faith coming by hearing God speak. We have also understood that Jesus did what He saw His Father doing, and we have the statement of Jesus, *'Man not live by bread alone, but by every word (rhema) shall that proceeds from the mouth of God,'* found in Matthew 4:4

Paul, in writing to the Romans expressed it like this –  
*'So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word (rhema) of God.'*

**Vital understanding** - We cannot create or increase faith by our effort, by ritual or by repetition. Faith comes by hearing God speak.

Essential word study

*'The significance of rhema (as distinct from logos) is exemplified by the instruction to take 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the word (rhema) of God,'* found in Ephesians 6:17. Here the reference is not to the whole bible as such, but to the individual scripture which the Spirit brings to our remembrance for use in time of need.' (Just as we saw demonstrated by Jesus in Matthew 4)

(Quote from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Bible Words)

**God speaking is not limited to what has been written into scripture.**

God frequently uses specific scriptures but is not limited by them when He speaks. When He speaks to us He addresses our needs. He also knows absolutely everything. So you may find God speaking even technical things related to your work when you put before the throne of grace a particular request.

When God speaks and we receive it – then the whole power of heaven is available to bring it to pass.

**Receive**

We have quoted Romans 5:17 - '*those who receive the abundance of grace.*' So we face a choice. We can receive or we can fail to receive. So we need to understand 'receive.'

Receive in the original text is '*lambano.*' It fully means 'to take hold of.' When God speaks we can either take hold of what He says – or we can dismiss it - 'I don't believe it' or 'was that really God?' or some other refutation of what He says.

**By faith is a major way of receiving healing.**

**Faith comes by hearing.**

**Hearing comes by the *rhema* word of God.**

**Further study - the booklet 'Hearing God Speak.'**

## 12 Healing when preaching

**God confirms His word by signs which accompany mission, teaching and preaching.**

*'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptised will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: in My name they will cast out demons,; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick and they will recover.'*

Mark 16:15-18

**The supernatural work of God Himself as signs following.**

Sometimes in my experience, God just does it; sometimes He gives a specific word; sometimes He calls to a specific person in the assembly. We have seen individual healing, multiple healings, deliverance and other manifestations of God's glory when proclaiming the gospel in teaching.

When we meet in these circumstances, we can come with expectation that God will do things amongst us, confirming His word.

Our role is to lay hands on the sick (as led by the Spirit) and God's role is to complete their healing - which may be instant or may be a process started at that point in time which leads to recovery.

### **A listening ear**

When teaching or preaching, and with the understanding that God wants to confirm the word through accompanying signs, (Mark 16:20) - then we should be alerted to listen.

He may just do things to His glory with no human intervention.

He may give words of knowledge through the speaker or others.

God is our Sovereign Lord – He will glorify Himself in the way(s) that He chooses. Mission, teaching, preaching, we are commanded to do – He does the confirmation.

### **Confirmation of the gospel**

Perhaps one reason why we do not see this happening in many church meetings is:

We don't expect it.

We don't listen.

We aren't preaching the truth – but rather something else. A watered down version or outright error.

## **13                    Healing by spiritual gift and calling.**

Paul lists spiritual gifts to the Corinthians in his first letter and chapter 12 verses 1 - 11 Wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, healings, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, interpretation of tongues.

When we meet together, church meetings, house groups, just a group of friends, we should hope and expect for the Spirit to bring the manifestation of spiritual gifts.

When one or more of the group come listening to the Lord then the scene is set for the Spirit to manifest.

Unfortunately it is very easy to come to such meetings without coming in a spiritual frame of mind – rather just sit, listen and go home!

Also unfortunately meetings are often organised to a specific pattern which gives no expectation or opportunity for involvement from the Holy Spirit.

### **The power of age to come.**

When we receive and operate with the spiritual gifts we are tasting the powers of the age to come.

When the Spirit speaks in this way all that is required is for us to receive (take hold of) what He is saying and act upon it. We can have the absolute assurance that what the Spirit says He will complete. (Later we will consider maintaining the blessing.)

When the Holy Spirit moves in the way He distributes such gifts as He wills – not as we think He should or in the way, or though the people, we think He should. So in the assembled congregation He, the Holy Spirit, may use the most unlikely person or people.

### **The healer**

God builds His church on the foundation of Jesus Christ and the appointment of certain roles to humans.

God has appointed these in the church: (1 Corinthians 12:28)

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| <b>First</b>  | <b>Apostles.</b> People chosen and anointed for a specific task – associated with building the church.   |
| <b>Second</b> | <b>Prophets.</b> People chosen and anointed to bring specific words from God – in this instance frequently correction and guidance.                      |
| <b>Third</b>  | <b>Teachers.</b> People chosen and anointed to teach all the God given truths in the scriptures, bringing understanding and maturity to the church body. |
| <b>Then</b>   | <b>Miracles</b> People chosen and anointed to do miraculous things.  |

It is important to understand that God appoints and not man – by their fruit you will know them. Matthew 7:16. Where man tries to make these appointments it is unlikely to bear fruit unless by coincidence man happens to agree with God's choice.

The scripture then goes on to say that various giftings are also given - healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.

So we can expect to find amongst us people who flow and operate in the ministry of healing - whether by appointment in the church or by manifesting a spiritual gift.

### **Prophecy and prophets, teaching and teachers.**

In this context it is useful to understand the difference. Not everyone who prophesies or who teaches is a prophet or teacher. According to 1 Corinthians 14 we should all seek to prophecy – as the Spirit gives us utterance. Some have the spiritual gift of prophecy and are used in this way often. However, the appointment as prophet is a different level all together – the same applies to teaching. Whilst we all can bring a word of instruction, we are told that not many should be teachers - as they will have a stricter judgement. (James 3:1)

So we see three levels:

- 1) The Spirit moves on anyone to bring a prophecy or a word of instruction.
- 2) Some are gifted to prophecy or bring words of instruction.

3) A few are appointed to the position of prophet or teacher in the church.

## 14 Healing by faith

### Definitions –

Greek noun 'pistis' is derived from the verb 'peitho' which means to have confidence in, to have trust in. The noun is nearly always translated as 'faith.' (However, in the 'Jewish New Testament' translation by Stern it is mostly better translated as 'trust.')

### Trust

We can consider trust (faith) in different ways -

**General trust** - we could call this our default position. I trust my loving heavenly Father even though I might go through difficult circumstances in life. General trust is built up by the understanding and the receiving of scripture. For example - everyone goes through difficult experiences, but it a joy to know that *'all things work together for good to those who are called according to His purpose.'* Romans 8:28. Not all our experiences are good but God will bring good out of them for us.

( An excellent verse for meditation described in chapter 8)

This trust is the result of hope - the certainty of future blessing.

**Specific trust** – trust (faith) that comes when we hear God speak to us. What He says He will do when we receive His specific word.

**Without faith (trust) it is impossible to please God.**

*‘But without faith it is impossible to please Him , for He who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.’* Hebrews 11:6

A simple summary - we must trust Him.

**Let’s learn a little Greek**

**Graphe** Translated - the scriptures, the writings.  
This is the material to study to build up our knowledge of Him and our trust in Him. (Not translated ‘word.’)

**Logos** Translated ‘word.’ This is one of the personal names of Jesus. Jesus is the full revelation of God in bodily form (Colossians 2:9). So we can understand that ‘logos’ incorporates all the scripture and all other revelation of God.

**Rhema** Is a little phrase or saying. – which brings God’s specific message for our circumstances and needs – now. – also translated ‘word.’

(As 'logos' and 'rhema' have importantly different meanings it is worth noting in your bible every time 'rhema' is translated 'word.' I find that most helpful in understanding the meaning of the text.)

### **By His stripes you are healed.**

Yes and No. Yes - Jesus carried our sicknesses, diseases and pains on the cross. (Isaiah 53: 4) He has done it! All that is required is the specific strategy to bring that spiritual reality into our physical experience. No – just repeating and repeating, parrot fashion, this scripture will not result in physical healing. Regretfully I know of cases, and I believe there are many, many such cases, where people have 'made a stand of faith' in this way and failed even to physical death. Those who teach this 'faith' have much to answer for! They say -

### **Not healed - you don't have faith?**

In certain places and amongst those who have followed certain teaching – this is their cry. Not healed - its your fault. You haven't built up your faith enough to be healed or you are in sin and can't be healed. It is a mis-understanding with tragic consequences.

### **Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God**

It comes down to not understanding the three Greek words we looked at above. So let's revisit Jesus own teaching:

*'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word (rhema) that proceeds from the mouth of God.'*

Matthew 4:4

This is not every *graphe* or every *logos*. It is every little phrase or saying proceeding (present tense) from the mouth of God.

Confirmed by Paul writing to the Romans (10:17) *'So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word (rhema) of God.'*

**Now it is simple and effective**

When God speaks His *rhema* word to us, unless we reject it, faith will come and so will the promise contained in His (*rhema*) word.

**Further study:** Booklet 'Faith or presumption.'

## 15            **Healing by God's own act.**

### **God is good**

The scripture tells us that it the goodness of God that leads us to repentance in Romans 2:4.

God is ultimately good. So we should not be surprised that the Sovereign Lord can and does sometimes just do wonderful things – including healing.

One friend of ours was just sitting in a meeting, joining in the worship, when he felt a rush of heat through his body. He was instantly healed of back pain caused by a serious back injury.

In scripture we read of the woman who was healed of a flow of blood just by reaching out and touching Jesus garment.

We are invited to come to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:16). So we come and express our need to the Lord – sometimes He doesn't answer but just does the thing we have requested – other times He speaks. God is sovereign.

We must not restrict the Lord in any way, but be grateful for what He chooses to do.

## 16

## Defend it or loose it

### We are warned

**Warning 1**                    *'The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.'*                    John 10:10

**Warning 2**                    *'Your adversary, the devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.'*                    1 Peter 5:8

Paul, writing to the Ephesians, urges a reality check –  
*'We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.'*                    Ephesians 6:12

### The purpose of the church

*'To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known, by the church, to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.'*                    Ephesians 3:10

Paul goes on to say, *'according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.'* (verse 11)

If we were to judge by the distinct lack of teaching on this subject and the lack of spiritual action in many churches, then we would have to see Ephesians 6 verse 12 truncated to 'We do not wrestle.' Unfortunately this can be true of very many of us.

So our enemy will, or might try to, steal away our healing, or any other gift of God. He will try to stifle our calling reducing our fruitfulness. So it is a case of defend it or loose it!

An acquaintance was visibly healed in an FGBMFI meeting – everyone could see that his knee was healed - he didn't hobble anymore. But later the symptoms returned. A dozen of us, all of one mind, counselled him to resist the enemy, to stand firm and to insist that the enemy be gone. He was unable to accept that he was being robbed and preferred to think he wasn't healed after all. A few weeks later he was involved in a motor accident and the other knee was badly damaged. There are occasions when we have to defend our healing by standing firm against the wiles of the enemy.

Defend it or loose it!

Aware? - now we need to see how to continue -

## 17 Battle on

### The issue of authority

When considering the issue of dealing with the spiritual enemy - that is satan and his minions authority is the first key question. Do we have authority to overcome the works of the enemy?

The answer is most certainly YES for a number of reasons:

Jesus sacrifice on the cross was not a lost encounter – Jesus voluntarily laid down His life. John 10:11, 10:15, 10:17-18 and 15:13. It was an action that has secured the victory over evil.

Jesus gave His authority to His disciples making all spirits subject to them.

We are filled with the Holy Spirit such that John is able to say, *'greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world,'* in the context of false prophets and spirits. (Chapter 4 verse 1-4)

*'Resist the devil and he will flee from you.'*

James 4:7

## **Armour**

Paul writing to the Ephesians in chapter 6 verse 10-17 lists armour available for us in the battle against the wiles of the devil.

***Gird your waist with truth*** - first essential – get a good understanding of the truth through bible study, asking the Spirit to lead you into all truth.

***Breastplate of righteousness*** - ‘those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be filled’ Matthew 5:6. Act righteously because unrighteousness can give place to the devil. Ephesians 4:27.

***Shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace*** – before you ‘walk’ (take any action) put the right ‘shoes’ on - the right ‘shoes’ being the understanding of the truth. So the truth is - a way to understand (waist), a way to be (righteous breastplate), and a way to proceed (feet).

***Shield of faith*** – as you go there will be enemy ‘darts.’ These darts will be lies and accusations which may come from others or directly against your mind and thinking from the enemy. Dismiss them by trusting who you are in Christ.

***Helmet of salvation*** – keep your mind protected by always believing the biblical truth. Your faith and the practice of renewing the mind keeping you safe. For more on renewing the mind see the booklet.

..... and counter attack

***The sword (Short sword or dagger) of the Spirit*** which is the *rhema* word of God – Jesus used it in His encounter with satan recorded in Matthew 4:1-11

The use of the *rhema* word when God gives it to you ends that particular battle. It is an ‘infighting’ weapon, not an unwieldy sabre.

We don’t always receive *rhema* words and there are times we need to start aggressive and persistent action.

### **Persistence**

To understand effective persistence we need to look at the parable of the persistent widow found in Luke 18:1-8. This vital passage is frequently wrongly interpreted so we will go through in some detail.

*‘Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray (proseuchomai -to speak out loud) and not loose heart (enkakeo – turn coward).’* Note why the parable is given and the more literal meaning of the text.

*‘Saying, There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man.’* The judge is NOT God and NOT man! So, in the parable, the judge can only represent satan or his minions.

*‘Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, Get justice for me from my adversary.’* Note she is speaking out loud to the judge demanding release from her problem.

*‘And he would not for a while (Note persistence will be required); but afterward he said within himself, though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles (kopos – beats me out) I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary (hupopiazō – to beat black and blue) me.’* Note the effect on the

unrighteous judge of the widow not being cowardly and speaking out loud with her demands. (Note the more emphatic, literal meaning of the Greek words)

*‘Then the Lord said, “hear what the unjust judge said,”*

*The unjust judge said, - ‘And shall God not (literally God will in no way) avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?’* It is clear from this statement that, in addition to railing at the unjust judge, the widow was praying to God - as, of course, we would expect.

Jesus then speaks, *‘I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth? (or will we all have turned coward - implied.)*

So when we know we have been robbed in some way it is time to seek the Lord and to come against the devil, in the way illustrated for us in the parable, remembering that the widow was aggressive with her demands.

### **Pre-emptive action**

We don't necessarily know when we are going to be robbed or that our loss (of some sort) was through enemy activity. (Though God may warn us in advance through words or dreams or other means – in which case we can take specific action.)

Generally we can take pre-emptive action. So, for example, going to a business meeting or tendering for a contract, or going for a job interview and so on, I would take authority over the works of the enemy, binding him from affecting the meeting or its outcome in any way at all. The same principle applies to other things in life

and should especially be used when going for medical treatment in particular.

With contracts and jobs it is important to bear in mind that we should not expect, what we consider to be, success every time. We want to do the things God has prepared beforehand, we do not want some contract or job our enemy has lined up to snare us. So I pray for God's outcome either way and command the enemy not to interfere either way.

### **Medical issues.**

Why not pray first, before automatically going to the Doctor. If God speaks do what He says. If not, pray as indicated above, committing your way to the Lord, and binding the enemy, and go to the Doctor knowing your prayer cover is complete.

## 18 The place of prayer

### What is prayer?

In the last chapter we saw that prayer (to pray - *proseuchomai*) means to speak out loud. In the example of the persistent widow she was speaking out loud to the unrighteous judge.

So we can avoid 'religious' thinking. Prayer is speak to the Lord and to speak against the enemy – out loud wherever possible.

There is another Greek word translated as to pray - *deomai*. It means make a request. So here is another key component - keep it simple - make your request.

### Attitude

When we come to the Lord our attitude should one of thanksgiving – appreciating who He is and His wonderfully good nature. Don't be anxious – Father knows best!

*'Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer (proseuche) and supplication (deesis), with thanksgiving, let your requests be*



## 19 The Spirit quickens our mortal bodies

*'But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.'* Romans 8:11

Here is a wonderful truth – the Holy Spirit who dwells in us will give life to, or quicken, our mortal bodies. This is part of what one would call 'divine health.'

So why not, indeed we can and should, call upon the Holy Spirit to fulfil this function in our bodies when we are unwell, or sick, or physically weak. I also pray, asking the Holy Spirit to quicken my physical being at many other times during life – why not? I enjoy remarkably good health.

A potential way of praying:

'Thank you Holy Spirit, for dwelling in me - I really appreciate your presence. Please quicken and bring life to my mortal body. Thank you. Amen'

This can always be a part of our way of praying in a time of need of healing. It won't necessarily be the whole story, for we need to keep a listening ear for anything the Lord may want to speak to us – particularly in relation to anything specific in our lifestyle that might be affecting our bodies' health.

## 20 Lifestyle consequences - wrong thinking, wrong place.

### A stumbling block to health

A spiritual truth is almost hidden away in Proverbs 23:6-7:  
*'Do not eat the bread of a miser, nor desire his delicacies; for as he thinks in his heart, so is he.'*

The miser might offer you some delicacy but in his heart he is doing so with regret and with meanness - he may have an ulterior motive.

The point is this - one is as one thinks in one's heart.

Our thinking is powerful in determining our attitudes and will have bearing on our life and health. For example:

We saw in Philippians 4:6-7 how, by bringing our needs to Jesus, we can have peace. Paul said to them, **'Be anxious for nothing.'** This is very important. Anxiety can lead to depression. **'Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression.'** Proverbs 12:25

Scripture gives us the antidote to depression - put on, *'the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.'* Isaiah 61:3

Depressed, then grit your teeth and deliberately and with effort no

doubt, sing, shout, praise the Lord of glory for all you are worth.  
The heaviness, the depression will lift.

So avoid anxiety and worry – they are damaging to health.

Paul again:

*‘Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy – meditate on these things. .... and the God of peace will be with you.’*   Philippians 4:8-9

Fill your mind with the good stuff! Avoid negativity at all costs.

### **Learn to take your thoughts captive.**

*‘Bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.’*

2 Corinthians 10:5

This is warfare in the mind - and we have seen why it is important  
- what you allow yourself to think can be very damaging.

*‘I beseech you therefore, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.’*

Romans 12:1-2

### **Think with sober judgement**

This can work in a number of ways:

Paul advises the Romans not to think too highly of themselves – this could lead to pride, and God sets Himself against the proud.

But also do not think too lowly of yourself - it is true you were a miserable sinner. But you have been redeemed, justified before God – now you can come boldly to the throne of grace as a totally beloved son of God.

Don't think the way the world thinks – you will be robbed. The world does not think the same way as our Lord and Saviour.

*'Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.'*

Colossians 2:8

*'My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are My ways your ways, says the Lord. For as the heaven is higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts higher than your thoughts.'*

Isaiah 55:8-9

This is our calling – bring every thought into that higher realm – into the obedience of Christ.

**Wrong thinking will certainly damage your health – think sick and you will become sick.**

**Wrong place**

Sometimes we are put into a position that the Lord has not called us to - either by others or actually by ourselves. The bible is clear that the Lord has prepared good works for us to walk in those.

Ephesians 2:10, and that Jesus yoke is easy and His burden is light. Matthew 11:30.

So when we get ourselves into the wrong position in life, be it at work or particularly in the church, because that effects the body of Christ, we will find ourselves subject to stress that we are not supposed to suffer. This is one reason why so many church leaders seem to suffer extensive illness and stress - even unto death in some cases.

We should therefore be careful to make sure we are in the right calling - one obvious check is that our role does not contradict scripture. Paul expresses it clearly when he says the thief should cease from stealing and work at something good. (Ephesians 4:28) That is very obvious. What is not so clearcut is when we work at something we are not called to we are actually just piling up filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). What we consider we are doing as a righteous offering to the Lord only qualifies if it is that which He has already prepared beforehand for us.

Paul urges us not to grieve the Spirit in the same passage in Ephesians – *‘Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you have received redemption.’* In the last chapter we saw that the Spirit quickens our mortal bodies - this is a statement about general health and wellbeing. This process of quickening is impeded when we are out of step - whether that is consciously or unconsciously.

Paul is also very clear on church structure and the qualities of church leaders. John was damming of Diotrephes, who loved pre-eminence, in the church and would not receive him – even though

John had met Jesus personally and walked with Him in His life on earth.

Wrong job, wrong place will create stress – this will be mental with physical outworking. Suffering continual weakness and sickness may be a sign – as would lack of peace and joy be.

## **21 Lifestyle consequences - our actions**

**This should be obvious shouldn't it!**

**Eat too much - you will get fat – and risk much ill health as a result. It is just a matter of self control.**

**Drink too much - you will get drunk and risk damage to vital organs. It is just a matter of self control.**

**Spend too much - you will become poor. More self control.**

**Smoking, drugs, legal highs - all abuse the mind and body and are a pathway leading to ill health.**

**Dabble in occult practices - you put yourself in danger of enemy infiltration.**

**Abuse your God given body and mind and you will become sick.**

**Lack of exercise – body gets weak and flabby.**

**( 2 Peter 1:6 – *'add to knowledge self control and to self control perseverance.' .. and more!*)**

**Our calling is much higher.**

**We are called to possess ourselves in holiness.**

*'For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honour.'*

1 Thessalonians 4:3-4.

Whilst it is very clear that Paul is here specifically addressing immorality, it is also clear from other scriptures that there are other 'works of the flesh' which are unacceptable.

In seeking to possess our vessels in sanctification and honour we can see scripture giving other things to avoid:

*'Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like.'*

Galatians 5:19-24.

There are further things to avoid - such as anger, taking revenge instead of leaving it to the Lord, gossip etc – but one most important positive matter is forgiveness of others.

### **Unforgiveness will damage your health.**

The parable of the unforgiving servant found in Matthew 18: 21-35 carries the very important message – look, your master has forgiven you the huge debt you owed Him (because of your sin), therefore you must also forgive all others their small 'debt' to you because of their actions against you.

Our debt took Jesus to the cross. Someone's actions against you may seem large but in comparison they are very small.

You have been forgiven - you must forgive. That is a choice made in your mind and acted upon in your will. Don't say you can't – you can – it is a choice – and it is obedience to the word of the Lord.

**Warning in the scripture** – the unforgiving servant was delivered to the tormentors until he should pay. Jesus said our Heavenly Father will also do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.

(Note - biblically 'heart' is 'soul and spirit'. Soul is mind, will and emotions – hence forgiveness is a choice we make in our mind and action in our will. Our human spirit will already have made the choice to forgive - as the born again human spirit cannot sin, being indwelt by the Holy Spirit.)

Make the right choice - forgive – it is your choice. Otherwise unforgiveness is an open door for the tormentor.

**Unforgiveness and wrong actions will damage your health.**

**The antidote to lifestyle issues:**

- 1 Acknowledge need**
- 2 Repent**
- 3 Set a new achievable course**
- 4 Ask for help from the Holy Spirit**
- 5 Fill up with more and more love for Jesus**
- 6 Pray in tongues when tempted**
- 7 You will be changed bit by bit by the Holy Spirit.**

## 22 Lifestyle consequences - inherited.

**Scripture talks of consequences down to the third, fourth and in some circumstances tenth generation.**

Exodus chapter 20 has the ten commandments- the first of which is *'you shall have no other God's beside Me.'* A warning follows – *'For I, the Lord am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me.'* (Verses 1-6)

This seems to have rise to a proverb in Israel – *'The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge.'*

*'As I live, says the Lord God, you shall no longer use this proverb in Israel.'* Ezekiel 18:1-3

It seems that in Israel they had established 'doctrine' from a misunderstanding of the first commandment. It seems they were taking that which the Lord said was true of those who hate Him and applying it to themselves and their families making it a false proverb.

The same thing seems to happen in Christianity – where in ministry we sometimes hear people saying things are passed down to the third or fourth generation. This is clearly not so. But, our

enemy, satan, is a liar and can and does put this lie onto anyone who will accept it. Then, like all wrong thinking, it opens a doorway for further exploitation by the enemy – affecting our minds and bodies.

Do not accept the lie - repudiate it.

## **Genes**

We know from medical science that our characteristics come from a mixture of the characteristics of our parents genes. Sometimes this results in infirmity or weakness of some sort.

When we see this in ourselves or in others then it is time to seek the Lord for His word, His strategy, to ascertain what, if anything, to do about it.

Pray and ask the Lord to show you. There is no need to go trying to dig up problems when you are fit and healthy. I would only recommend considering the possibility of some inherited effect if there were health circumstances that persist over time.

(Over eating, drinking too much and other 'fleshly indulgences' are choices we make and not at all likely to be the result of inheritance.)

## 23 Temptation is normal

You are not tempted because you are bad or wrong in any way. You are tempted because that is what the enemy puts before you – just as he did with Eve in the Garden of Eden.

*‘Let no one say when he is tempted (or tested), “I am tempted (or tested) by God,” for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt (or test) anyone.’* James 1:13

*‘But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown, brings forth death.’* 1:14-15

Desire has to ‘conceive,’ and then it will give birth to sin.

‘Conceive’ in the Greek is *‘sullambano.’* It comes from two Greek words *‘sun’* meaning, to be with or union, and *‘lambano’* meaning, to take hold of.

So in our passage when desire (*epithumia* – meaning strong desire or lust) has conceived, then it gives birth to sin. So our wrong desire when it takes hold of our thinking, it will give birth to sin.

The antidote has already been discussed - **take every thought captive to the obedience of Jesus**. Don't indulge in wrong thinking.

John put it like this, *'Little children keep yourselves from idols.'*

(Idols being *'eidolon'* and meaning phantoms in the mind. Don't fantasize on evil desires.)

### **Jesus helps**

*'For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted (tested). He is able to aid those who are tempted.'* Hebrews 2:18

So we need to consider the sufferings of Christ in the next chapter.

## 24 Sharing the sufferings of Christ?

I hear some say, when they are sick, that they are sharing the sufferings of Christ. This is, of course, completely wrong thinking. Jesus was never sick!

So what are the sufferings of Christ?

To understand this we will need to look at 1 John 2:16 :

*'For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world.'*

Now we will turn to Matthew 4 :1-11 to see how Jesus suffered these temptations, as we are likely to suffer the same -

After fasting for 40 days, in the wilderness, Jesus was hungry. If you have ever fasted this long you will know that the body is becoming painful as it 'consumes' itself in trying to protect the vital internal organs as long as possible.

The tempter came to Him and said, *'If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.'* We know that Jesus could have done this - we see Him turning water into wine and multiplying bread and fish from nowhere.

This is the lust, or the strong desire, of the flesh we read about in 1 John above. Jesus answered, *'It is written man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'* Jesus denied the strong desire of His flesh because He certainly wasn't going to be at the beck and call of satan.

Later on Jesus makes the ultimate denial of His flesh by His sacrifice at Calvary.

The devil took Him to the pinnacle of the Temple. *'If you are the Son of God throw Yourself down. For it is written, He shall give His angels charge over you, and In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.'* But Jesus was not subject to the pride of life as mentioned by John above. So He replied, *'it is written again, you shall not tempt (test) the Lord your God.'*

Finally the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the Kingdoms of the world saying *'all these things I will give you if you will fall down and worship me.'* Then Jesus dismissed satan – *'away with you satan! For it is written you shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'* So here we see Jesus resisting the temptation – the lust of the eyes.

Now that we see the sufferings of Christ we can see that in sharing the same sufferings it has nothing to do with health.

## 25 A word for husbands.

As a born again believer I want to be able to pray to my Father in heaven and expect His grace and mercy to answer my prayer in the best way for me and my family.

Paul teaches the Ephesians in chapter 5 verses 22 to 33 that husbands are to love their wives as Jesus loves the church. That is to love your wife as your own body. As Jesus cleanses the church by the washing of water by the word (rhema) - implied is the command, that husbands do likewise.

Dear husband - in your family you are the one in the position of spiritual authority. The Lord God will honour that position as you pray - but it is conditional as stated by the Apostle Peter –

*‘Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honour to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.’*

1 Peter 3:7

(‘Hindered’ in Greek is *‘ekkopto’* - meaning ‘cut off.’ We certainly don’t want our prayers to be cut off!)

So, it is important to get our attitudes to our wives right, so that our prayers are not waylaid. We will find, that especially in time of need, as we ask, the Lord will give His specific *rhema* word to us, for our wives wellbeing.

Husbands love your wives, even denying yourself where necessary, it is the will of the Lord your God. Be gentle and loving in everything for them. Build them up – be like Jesus to them.

Your wife is a joint heir – not a lesser being! You have different roles on earth.

## 26 A word for wives

The marriage relationship is very important because it pictures Jesus and His bride.

The scripture warns of a very real danger for wives:

When Eve took the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, which resulted in Adam's sin and their expulsion from the garden, God gave a consequence –

*'To the woman He said, I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.'*      Genesis 3:16

It would be wrong to think that 'desire' here is sexual desire. It is not. It is desire to control. (Hebrew *tesugah*) We see this in the next chapter where Cain has killed his brother and God says to him, *'If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire (tesugah) is for you, but you should rule over it.'*

God's warning to Cain - sin will try to rule over you to control you.

God's warning to wives - don't try to control and rule over your husbands.

Rather wives are called to *'submit to your own husbands as to the Lord.'* Ephesians 5:22

The word 'submit' means to 'rank under,' and it is to do with the role on earth. It has nothing to do with eternity where there is neither male nor female. It is all to do with the picture of Jesus and the church, which is demonstrated by the human marriage between husband and wife.

Wives submit to your husbands because it is the declared will of the Lord your God that you do so.

(Hopefully your husband will be like the husband portrayed above.)

Added by my wife - 'But if your husband is not always right, submit anyway because you are actually submitting to the Lord and it is His responsibility to speak to your husband.'

## **27 Enemy action, evil spirits and demons.**

When considering health and healing we cannot ignore the question of demonic activity. Many times in scripture we read of Jesus healing the sick and casting out demons.

When we consider a healing need, whether it be our own, or that of someone to whom we are ministering, we need discernment

### **A question in Christianity!**

There are those who believe that, because we have the Holy Spirit, we could not possibly be host to a demon or evil spirit. This is absolutely true of our born again, Spirit filled human spirit – which is full of light and cannot sin – see 1 John 3:9. With the Holy Spirit residing in our human spirit there is no question of evil spirits also being present there, being full of light there is no question of darkness.

However, the gift of discernment is available because it is not true of our flesh - that is our physical body, and our soul.

So demons and evil spirits can access the human body and soul.

**Jesus simply commanded evil spirit(s) or demons(s) to leave** – sometimes with dramatic results. For us it can seem rather more difficult.

For us it can be helpful to clear the ground first:

Does the person want to be set free?

Is there occult activity which requires repentance?

Is there unforgiveness which needs to be cleared out of the way first?

There may be other things and the minister needs to be sensitive to the leading of the Spirit in this regard.

Then, in chapter 17, under the heading ‘persistence,’ we saw how the widow had to persevere in her speaking out against the unjust judge, and how he was unwilling at first. It can be like this with evil spirits and demons. We need to know the outcome, and stand our ground, and persist, when ministering.

This book is not a handbook to deliverance ministry and anyone wanting to be used in this ministry can access other suitable material. Sometimes the need just appears suddenly and we seem to know that it’s a demon or evil spirit. We should not be afraid – *‘He that is in us is greater than he that is in the world.’* 1 John 4:4 – as the Spirit leads it is right to just command the demon to leave.

Always ‘fill the house’ after deliverance praying for a new refilling of the Holy Spirit. Evil spirits love an empty’ house’ – Matthew 12:45.

## 28 Pre-emptive prayer

We would all suffer much less trouble if we used pre-emptive prayer.

Going to an interview?

Negotiating a new contract?

Important meeting?

Any other matter?

This is my prayer:

‘Lord I commit this meeting/negotiation/whatever to you. Please give me that which I am supposed to have and keep away from me anything I am not supposed to have, in Jesus name. Amen

And ;

‘Satan. I bind you and forbid you from affecting this meeting/negotiation/whatever in any way shape or form. You will not give me anything I should not have and not steal anything I should have in Jesus name.’

You have to understand that we have authority over the works of the enemy but at the same time recognise his lack of willingness - so whilst I find this way of praying very effective it is not 100% guaranteed – so there can be times when perseverance against the enemy is required. And where humans are involved they have their own free will which might be used to affect a situation adversely.

Mr Businessman, please realise you are not supposed to win every contract – particularly those which will turn bad. Pray in the way suggested above and relax into the knowledge that the Lord God will direct your paths.

Medical issues - pray as indicated in earlier chapters.

## 29 Overcomers

The first letter of John is a wonderful source of biblical truth so far as born again believers are concerned. John writes so *'that your joy may be full.'* 1:4

*You have an anointing from the Holy One and you know all things.*

*Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.*

*He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.*

*He has given us His Spirit.*

*As He is so are we in this world.*

*We love Him because He first loved us.*

*Perfect love casts out fear.*

*Whatever is born of God overcomes the world.*

*Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.*

*He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself.*

*We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself and the wicked one does not touch him.*

In considering the above statements we must remember that it is our human spirit which is born again and indwelt by the Holy Spirit – our human spirit cannot sin and is not touched by the enemy. (3:9 and 5:18) Our flesh should not, but certainly can, sin. John provides the answer to this problem:

*'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'* 1 John 1:9

Stand up, brush yourself down with this verse and walk on fully restored.

And so we walk on in life, knowing the goodness, grace and mercy of God, who, knowing our failures and weaknesses, nevertheless guarantees our eternal destiny and provides for all our needs in life, bringing good out of every situation for us.

Be positive, be more and more in love with Jesus, be expectant – the Lord God wants you to demonstrate His manifold wisdom to the principalities and powers and to be -

**By faith enjoying the powers of the age to come.**

## **30 Still there are puzzles**

**We are left with some puzzling questions:**

**Why isn't everyone healed?**

To some degree this booklet will have provided answers. Sometimes we pray for healing when what is required is deliverance. Demons do not respond to prayers for healing – so nothing happens.

Sometimes we are demanding that God do something by our constant proclamations - 'By His stripes I am healed ' - true but a strategy is needed to bring the truth into earthly reality. Just repeating the truth without seeking His strategy in the same way that Jesus did, is likely to mean no result.

Lack of faith - we don't have faith because we haven't heard the Lord and faith comes by hearing Him.

Sometimes we 'blame God' for the position instead of our enemy or our circumstances. Blaming God is not helpful in seeking healing!

Mostly it comes down to not hearing the Lord with His strategy rather than our presumption! Jesus did not go round saying 'By My stripes you are healed,' rather He used the strategy provided by His Father.

### **Why do some beloved children of God get sick?**

There are times when we think, 'If I were God I would not let this person get sick.' This is, of course, very wrong thinking. We are putting our 'wisdom' above the wisdom of God.

People get sick because we live in a fallen world, because we don't follow righteousness and leave ourselves open. Our enemy attacks us and we don't realise it. God does not send sickness on His children – that comes from the enemy and from the fallen world.

### **Why doesn't God intervene?**

Particularly relevant to accidents. Because fundamentally He has called man to have dominion over the earth. He will intervene by faith when we seek Him. God is not controlling the circumstances of everyday life – satan is the prince of this world with the power to rob, kill and destroy. We are to demonstrate God's manifold wisdom to principalities and powers – that could not happen if God was controlling all the minutiae of everyday life.

In the very beginning God appointed man to have dominion in this world. (Genesis 1)

So it is not a question that God allows something to happen. God has set the world in motion with the intention that man has dominion – He intervenes through faith when we ask. Man let the enemy in and lives with the consequences of that failure. God provides the victory in Jesus Christ. The consequences can be overcome by trust and through faith.

*‘For by one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Christ Jesus’*

Romans 5:17

*‘Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.’* Hebrews 4:16

As I said in the introduction, I don’t claim to have all the answers, yet I hope you have gained some more insights as you have worked through this offering.