

Healing Power of Prayer

How does the healing power of prayer work? Why isn't everyone healed?

How does the healing power of prayer work? Whole books have been written about the many facets of healing, but the command associated with healing prayer comes from James 5:14: "Is any one of you sick? He should call for the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the *prayer of faith* will make the sick person well..."

God is a compassionate and merciful God who does heal. This we know, but sometimes the healing powers seem to be in the faith of those who are praying. When Jesus healed the woman who had been bleeding for 12 years, he said to her, "Daughter, Your faith has healed you..." (Mark 5:34). When Jesus healed two blind men, He said, "...According to your faith will it be done to you" (Matthew 9:29). And when Jairus requested healing for his daughter, Jesus said, "Don't be afraid, just believe, and she will be healed" (Luke 8:50). Acts 3:16 says, "...It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see."

Conversely, healing may not take place due to lack of faith. In Mark 6:5-6 it says that few were healed and Jesus "was amazed at their lack of faith." Again in Luke 9:41, Jesus' disciples could not heal a young boy. When they asked why they were not successful, Jesus said, "O unbelieving and perverse generation..."

Why Isn't Everyone Healed?

Sometimes God allows us to have infirmities that will cause us to look to Him for His strength and power. In 2 Corinthians 12:7, Paul says, "To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, my power is made perfect in weakness.'"

Infirmities can teach us valuable lessons about our faith. Psalm 119:71 says, "It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees." And in Romans 5:3, "We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they are good for us - they help us learn to endure" (NLT).

When Jesus healed people in the gospels, He often told them not to tell anyone about being healed. He did not want others to focus on His miracles, but instead to focus on the glory of God. When Jesus heard that his friend Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was for two more days, saying, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it" (John 11:4). When Jesus arrived, Lazarus was dead so instead of healing him, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead! We may miss the whole message of Jesus if we are focused only on being healed from our disease and not on the Savior who heals.

Finally, not all are healed because it is God's ultimate choice. We know that God is compassionate and merciful. He has full authority over all sickness and can choose to heal whomever He chooses, whenever He chooses. We don't always know all of the answers as to why - just that His ways are higher than ours.

Ultimately, our full physical healing awaits us in Heaven. Revelation 21:4 says, "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." It can be our goal to be less preoccupied with our physical condition in this world, and be a little more preoccupied with our spiritual condition: "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship."