The Key To Scriptural Healing

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Chapter 1
Roadblocks to Healing

The road to divine healing is seldom an expressway. More often than not it is strewn with roadblocks placed in our way by the devil to keep God's people from the blessing of health which God has provided.

These roadblocks wear many subtle disguises and come from many sources. Some have their basis in tradition; others in superstition. Still others are based on misquoted and misunderstood Scriptures.

In order to remove some of these obstacles that hinder believers from receiving divine healing, let us examine some of the more common roadblocks.

Roadblock No. 1: "God sends sickness upon people."

Some have said that the Old Testament declares that God sent sickness on people. Those who say this usually quote Exodus 15:26, "*If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight... I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee.* "

Similar Scriptures are Isaiah 45:7, "*I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things*"*;* and Micah 1:12, "*For the inhabitant of Maroth waited carefully for good: but evil came down from the Lord unto the gate of Jerusalem.* "

Obviously, these passages in the *King James Version* of the Bible do not give the true meaning of the original Hebrew, for we know that God doesn't *create* evil. Evil doesn't come from heaven. God only *permits* evil; He doesn't create it.

Evil could not come from heaven, because there is no evil there. God permitted it to come, but He didn't create it. Nor does He create sickness. He only permits it to come as a result of man's disobedience.

The key to these difficulties lies in the fact that the active verb in the Hebrew has been translated in the causative sense when it should have been translated in the permissive sense.

Dr. Robert Young, the author of *Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible,* and an outstanding Hebrew scholar, points this out in his book *Hints and Helps to Bible Interpretation.* Although this book is no longer in print, I made notes from it many years ago. Dr. Young says that in Exodus 15:26, the literal Hebrew reads, "I will permit to be put upon thee none of the diseases which I have permitted to be brought upon the Egyptians, for I am the Lord that healeth thee."

Some think God made Job sick. God permitted it, but the devil did it.

We must bear in mind the Scripture in Acts 10:38, "*How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.*" This important Scripture shows that Jesus is the Healer; Satan the oppressor. *Nowhere in the New Testament do we find God putting sickness on anyone!*

Remember, when God commanded Moses to go down into Egypt and lead the children out of Egyptian bondage, He sent Moses to plead with Pharaoh to release the people. God did not send plagues to come upon the Egyptian people.

But when Pharaoh hardened his heart, God withdrew His protecting hand and permitted the plagues to sweep over the land of Egypt. When the final plague, the messenger of hell — death — was permitted, death went forth and destroyed the firstborn of every Egyptian household. Only then was Pharaoh compelled to yield and let the children of Israel go.

Where does death come from? Does it come from

heaven? Are there any dead in heaven? The answer, of course, is no. Death has never entered there, and it will never enter there. There will be no death in heaven.

Does death come from God? No, He is not the author of death; He's the author of life. God hates death.

Where does death come from, then? It comes from Satan, who has the power of death:

> **HEBREWS 2:14**
> **14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.**

The law of sin and death is the devil's law. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus is God's law. Romans 8:2 says, "*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*"

We have the promise that when Jesus comes again, this last enemy shall be put underfoot. Christ came to destroy "*him that had the power of death.* " Satan isn't destroyed yet, but he will be put in the bottomless pit for a thousand years after Jesus returns. After the end of all things, Satan will be put in the lake of fire and brimstone (Rev. 20:10).

The plague of death that came upon Egypt did not come until God withdrew His hand of protection and permitted it. His permission, however, should not be confused with commission. God *permits* people to establish bars and nightclubs. He permits people to steal and kill. But He certainly doesn't *commission* it. There is a vast difference between permission and commission.

Peter declared on the Day of Pentecost that Christ was crucified by the hands of wicked men: "*Him… ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain*" (Acts 2:23). It was the devil's work done by his

own children.

Jesus said in John 8:44, "*Ye are of your father the devil,*

and the lusts of your father ye will do...." It was the Pharisees who stirred up the high priesthood. It was the devil and his children. It was not the work of God, although God permitted it.

The fact that God permits wickedness doesn't mean that people have to commit sinful acts any more than it means that people have to turn against Christ. Many people are crucifying Him afresh today because they are rejecting Him. However, God didn't commission them to reject Him; He just permits them to make their own choice, for man has free will to accept or reject Him.

Roadblock No. 2: "My healing may not be God's will."

When some people pray for healing, they think they should pray, "*If it be thy will.*" That prayer, however, is unnecessary, because God has plainly told us in His Word that it is His will to heal us.

A sinner wouldn't pray, "Lord, save me *if it* be thy will." That kind of prayer would be ridiculous, because God's Word already has declared that He is "*not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*" (2 Peter 3:9). God's Word also states that "*whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely*" (Rev. 22:17). Therefore, the sinner doesn't have to pray "*If it* be thy will."

It is just as ridiculous for a child of God to pray, "Lord, heal me *if it* be thy will." God's Word plainly tells us that Jesus already has paid the price for our healing. Matthew 8:17, for example, says, "*Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.*"

When I read this verse and understood fully what it really meant, I rejoiced in it, for then I was able to emphasize the word "our." He took *our* infirmities and bore *our* sicknesses — and I am included in that word "our." I can say that He took *my* infirmities and bore my sicknesses. That brings it right down to where I live. I

don't have to bear my sicknesses any more. He bore them that I might be free!

When I made this discovery, I decided there wasn't any need for both Him and me to bear them. If Jesus bore them that I might be free, why should I pray, "If it be thy will"? The Bible states that it *is* His will!

Most people who don't believe in divine healing stay away from this Scripture. However, occasionally a brave soul will come up with what he thinks is the answer to the Scripture once and for all.

One person said this Scripture meant that Christ took the sicknesses of the people who lived at that time, but it doesn't apply to us today. He forgot that Matthew wrote his Gospel *after* Jesus died. If healing had applied only to those living when Jesus lived on this earth in the flesh, Matthew would have written, "He Himself took *their* infirmities and bare *their* sicknesses." But Matthew didn't write it that way. The Holy Spirit, through Matthew, wrote, "He Himself took *our* infirmities and bare *our* sicknesses."

Someone else advanced the theory that this Scripture, rather than referring to the past, refers to the future; thus, this would come to pass during the Millennium. That can't be true, however, because there will be no need for healing then; the curse will be lifted. Paul said we will all be changed in a moment, "*in the twinkling of an eye*"[1] (1 Cor. 15:52). Our bodies won't be plagued with sickness during the Millennium, so we will not need this provision for healing.

The promise of divine healing belongs to us now, for we are subject to sickness in this life, not in the next. The promise that He took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses belongs to us today. Therefore, we don't need to pray, "If it be thy will." His Word has clearly shown us His will.

Someone might ask, without quoting the entire verse,

"But didn't Christ teach us to pray, 'Father, thy will be done'?" To use this portion of Scripture, however, is to use only half a truth. And as someone has said, "Beware of the half truth. You may have gotten the wrong half!"

Christ taught us to pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Christ was teaching us to pray that God's will might be done here on earth just as it is done in heaven. There is no sickness or disease in heaven. If it is not His will that there be sickness and disease in heaven, then it is not His will that there be sickness and disease on earth. If His will is truly done on earth as it is done in heaven, there will be no sickness or disease among us.

A man once told me he knew it wasn't God's will to heal a certain condition he had in his body. He said that just as he awoke one morning, his room lit up and someone in a long white robe appeared to him. He thought it was Jesus, although he did not see his face. This person spoke to the man and said, "It's not my will to heal you." Then he disappeared. The man accepted the fact that it wasn't God's will to heal him.

I asked him, "What if one of your unsaved loved ones told you God had revealed to him that it was not God's will to save him? You would immediately point out Scriptures proving God is not willing that any person should perish but that all should come to repentance. You would explain that the person whom they mistook for Jesus was really a messenger of Satan, for Jesus would not contradict what He did and said in the Word of God."

We can be just as certain that divine healing is God's will as we can be that saving the lost is His will. We know it by knowing His Word. God's Word is His will.

The same Bible that gives us John 3:16 also says, "*Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses*" (Matt. 8:17).

That same Bible says, "*Surely he hath borne our griefs*

[Hebrew — sicknesses], *and carried our sorrows* [Hebrew — diseases]: *yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of 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 with his stripes we are healed*" (Isa. 53:4,5).

And the same Bible says, "*Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed*" (1 Peter 2:24).

In Acts 9:34 we read, "*And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.* " A form of the Greek word translated "whole" here is translated "ye were healed" in First Peter 2:24. Peter told Aeneas to rise for Christ had made him whole.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). He never changes. If He made Aeneas whole, He can and will make believers whole today.

Roadblock No. 3: "Hezekiah used a poultice."

In Isaiah 38 we read:

ISAIAH 38:1-5

4. **In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live.**

5. **Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the Lord.**

6. **And said, Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.**

7. **Then came the word of the Lord to Isaiah, saying,**

8. **Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the Lord, the God**

of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen
thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years.

Then we read in verses 20 and 21 of this chapter, "*The Lord was ready to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the Lord. For Isaiah had said, Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaister upon the boil, and he shall recover.*"

Some have wondered why Isaiah told Hezekiah to put a lump or poultice of figs on his neck. One very able Bible scholar who was a medical doctor, minister, and Hebrew student says that, according to the Hebrew, Hezekiah had a carbuncle on his neck. These can be very serious.

God already had told Hezekiah that he would not die, but would live for 15 more years. Therefore, the poultice of figs was not necessary as a medicinal aid. It had no curative powers whatsoever. It served no medical purpose. Many people through the years have used different poultices as cleansing agents, and some feel that Hezekiah's poultice may have been used in this manner.

I am convinced, however, that God told Hezekiah, through the prophet Isaiah, to lay this lump of figs on the boil as an act of obedience and an act of faith, just as God told Naaman the leper to dip in the Jordan River seven times and his leprosy would be cleansed.

Dipping in the muddy Jordan didn't have any curative value. It didn't heal Naaman any more than this poultice healed Hezekiah. It was a test of his faith and obedience.

I have found in my ministry that sometimes the Spirit of God will lead me to tell a sick person to do something as an act of their faith in order to be healed.

Once while preaching in Oklahoma, the Lord led me to tell all the crippled people to run. The Lord did not tell me to pray for them or to lay hands on them.

The first man to come up for prayer couldn't lift his feet off the floor. He just scooted along and stood with his knees

bent. When I asked him if he could run, it startled

him and he answered, "Oh, no, I can't even walk, much less run."

Then I told him that the Lord had shown me that if he would run, he would be healed. That fellow took off scooting down one aisle and back up the next as fast as he could go. When he returned to the platform, he still was scooting. He wasn't a bit better. I told him to do it again, and this time I went with him, up one aisle and down the other. When he got back this time, he was perfectly healed and walking as normally as I was. God had told him to do something which seemingly was impossible as an act of faith and obedience, and the Lord honored his simple faith.

When the Spirit of God tells someone to do a certain thing, it involves an act of obedience and releases their faith. That doesn't mean that everyone who runs down the aisle will be healed, but it does mean that if God said to do it and you act on it, you will be healed.

Roadblock No. 4: **"Paul** left Trophimus sick at Miletum."

Second Timothy 4:20 says, "*Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.* " Some argue that divine healing must not always be God's will since Paul left Trophimus sick at Miletum.

In nearly every one of my meetings I leave some people sick, but I also see some of them healed. In nearly every meeting I leave some people unsaved, but I also see some saved.

Paul, as an apostle, did not carry healing power around with him. *Healing is primarily a faith proposition on the part of the individual who receives.*

No matter how much faith the minister may have, the effects of the individual's doubt will nullify the minister's faith. The Bible says, "*Can two walk together, except they be agreed?*" (Amos 3:3). Jesus said, "*if two of you shall*

agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 18:19). The negative side of this verse would naturally be that if they don't agree, it won't be done. Trophimus' faith had a part in his healing.

In his writings Paul differentiated between miracles and healing. Miracles of healing are instantaneous healings. Other healings are gradual, but they are still of God.

When Jesus prayed for the nobleman's son, the Bible says that the boy began to amend from that hour. It may be that when Paul left Trophimus, he still was sick from all outward appearances, but the healing process may have already begun.

A 28-year-old man who had never walked in his life was brought into one of my services in 1953 in Dallas, Texas. Doctors who had examined him could find no physical reason for his inability to walk. As far as they could tell, he was normal.

As I laid hands on him to pray for him, the Lord showed me that an evil spirit oppressed his body. This was the reason doctors could not help him. I rebuked that spirit. Then I told the young man that the demon that had been oppressing him was gone, and that he could walk.

I knew he would not get up and start walking immediately; his healing would come gradually. A year and a half later I was back in Dallas and learned that this young man was now walking everywhere on his own.

Often gradual healings like his are greater than instant healings. Some people who are healed instantly forget God. On the other hand, those who get better gradually as they continue to believe God's Word develop strong faith.

Roadblock No. 5: "Paul had a thorn in the flesh."

2 **CORINTHIANS 12:7-10**
7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through

the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.
9. **For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.**
10. **And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.**
11. **Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.**

The thought is widely held that Paul had a sickness which God refused to heal. This teaching has led many to believe that it must be God's will for many of His saints to be sick. It has held people in bondage when they should be delivered.

One common belief is that Paul suffered from some disease of the eyes and was nearly blind. The Bible states that the Lord Jesus appeared in a vision to Ananias and told him to go and lay hands on Saul that he might receive his sight (Acts 9:12-17). The next verse says that God healed him. To conclude that Paul had eye trouble because of that brief blindness would be to belittle the work of God.

When Paul was on the island of Miletus on his way to Rome, he preached to the people and told them about the redemptive work of God. If his eyes had been full of pus, as some claim, would those people have believed God for healing? Yet the Bible says that when Paul laid hands on them, they were heeded.

It is true that God permitted this "thorn in the flesh" to come upon Paul, but it was not from God. The Scripture says that a "messenger of Satan was permitted to buffet him." *The Bible does not say that this thorn in the flesh was a sickness.*

Notice how the expression "thorn in the

flesh" is used

elsewhere in the Bible. Before the children of Israel went into Canaan's land, God told them to destroy the inhabitants of the country, the Canaanites, for if they didn't, these Canaanites would give the children of Israel trouble; they would be a thorn in their side. There was no reference here to sickness (Num. 33:55).

Neither was Paul's thorn sickness. It was a messenger of Satan to buffet him. Everywhere Paul went, the devil stirred up strife against Paul.

Paul wrote of the many times he had been whipped, stoned, and left for dead. He wrote of being put in jail, and even of fighting with lions. Yet in all his writing about persecutions and tribulations, not one time does he include sickness among them. Nowhere in the Scriptures do we find where Paul was ever disabled by sickness in any of his ministry.

Why did God permit this thorn in the flesh to buffet Paul? The Scriptures say it was to keep Paul from developing a tendency to be prideful about the revelations and visions he had had.

Therefore, before anyone claims that he has a "thorn in the flesh," it might be well to ask how many revelations and visions he has had. Most people who think they have a thorn in the flesh haven't had any kind of revelation or vision. All they are doing in their ignorance and doubt is permitting Satan to defeat them and keep them from the blessings of God.

However, there are some who do have a thorn in the flesh in some of the ways Paul did, because the devil is ever present to stir up trouble and hinder them in the work they are doing for God. But notice that God has said, "*My grace is sufficient for thee.*" God's grace gives us power to rise above the buffetings of Satan.

Roadblock No. 6: "I am suffering for the glory of God."

Those who support this belief usually point to the Scrip-

ture in the ninth chapter of John where Jesus passed by and saw a man who had been born blind.

His disciples asked Him who had sinned, the parents or the man, causing him to be blind. Jesus said, "*Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him*" (v. 3).

Some reason from this verse that the man was born blind in order that God might get glory from it. Jesus went on to say, however, "*I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.*" The works of God weren't made manifest in the blind man until Christ did that which He was sent to do — He healed the man's blindness.

What about Lazarus? Doesn't the Bible say he was sick for the glory of God? Reading the story from the eleventh chapter of John's Gospel, we see Jesus with His disciples when word came that Lazarus was sick.

Jesus purposely tarried instead of hurrying to His friend's bedside. He told His disciples, "*This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby*" (v. 4).

When Jesus arrived in Bethany with His disciples, Lazarus had been dead four days. Martha ran out to meet Jesus and said that if He had been there, her brother would not have died. Jesus told her that He was the resurrection and the life:

JOHN 11:24-26
12. **Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.**
13. **Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:**
14. **And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?**

Shortly after this, Martha protested at Christ's command that Lazarus' gravestone be rolled away — she knew his body would be decomposing and would stink after four days. But Jesus said, "*Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?*" (v. 40).

Martha hadn't seen the glory yet. She didn't see the glory of God in her brother's death. The glory of God hadn't been made manifest yet. The glory was manifested in Lazarus' resurrection and healing. He not only had to be *resurrected,* but he also had to be *healed* of whatever had caused his death.

God is glorified through healing and deliverance; not through sickness and suffering.

Roadblock No. 7: "Sickness is God's chastening."

It is true that the Bible says, "*For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth*.. .." (Heb. 12:6). However, it does not say, "Whom the Lord loveth he maketh sick!"

It is a mistake to take one small portion of Scripture and try to prove something. There is no reference to sickness in this text. There is no implication of sickness or disease in the word "chasteneth" in the original Greek.

For the full meaning of this word we look to the writings of the recognized Greek scholar Dr. Robert Young, and also to W. E. Vine, author *of An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words.*

From them we learn that this word "chasten" literally means "child train," "educate," or "teach." Just as babies need to be taught and corrected so they can grow to be healthy children and adults, so baby Christians need to be taught and corrected so they can grow to be spiritually healthy Christians. They need to be disciplined and governed, which this word means in the original Greek.

Certainly some of the problems in our country today stem from the lack of discipline and religious training in

the home. Children must be disciplined, corrected, and trained in love.

Matthew 7:9-11 says, "*Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?*"

God will train and discipline us with His hand of love, "*for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth.* "

Chapter 2
Discipline in the Church

While it is true that divine healing belongs to Christian believers and it is God's will that they be healed, it also is true that if some persist in disobedience, God will permit the devil to put sickness upon them.

We cannot honestly preach divine healing without these Scriptures, because they also concern sickness. (Actually, if we really used New Testament authority, we should turn these disobedient ones over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh.)

First Corinthians 5:1 says, "*It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.*"

Paul is talking here about people in the church; not unbelievers outside the church. These people are members of the Church at Corinth. They have been born again and filled with the Holy Spirit. They even have gifts of the Spirit operating in their lives. Yet, among them was a man who was living with his father's wife. That doesn't mean it was his mother; it was evidently his stepmother. He had taken her away from his father and was living with her.

Paul went on to say, "*And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus*" (vv. 2-5).

Too many times people say, "Just leave them alone. God will take care of them." The Bible, however, says the Church is to turn them over to the devil. God doesn't

destroy the flesh. God permits it, but He doesn't do it. God never has made anyone sick. Even this man who was living in sin with his stepmother wasn't going to be made sick by God. He had a certain amount of protection because he was in the Church.

Looking at the end of this chapter, we read in verses 12 and 13, "*For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.* "

Those "without" are those people out in the world. God judges them, but He isn't going to judge the man in the Church, for we are to judge those who are within the Church. The Church is instructed to put away those who continue in sin; to turn them over to Satan "*for the destruction of the flesh*."

Now who is it that the Bible says destroys the flesh, referring to sickness and disease? The Bible says it is Satan.

What is the purpose of turning this one over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh? "*That the spirit may be saved,* " Paul teaches (v. 5).

When anyone who has known God finds himself in this predicament, he will turn to God and call on Him! As long as everything is going all right, however, he will think he is getting by with his sinful acts and he will continue on his course.

The passage of Scripture in First Corinthians 11:23-29 usually is thought of in connection with the sacrament of Communion or the Lord's Supper. Studying it closely, we will find some rich truths concerning divine healing.

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-29
23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I
delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night

in which he was betrayed took bread:
15. **And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said,**
Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this
do in remembrance of me.
16. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he
had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my
blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of
me.
17. **For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup,**
ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.
18. **Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this**
cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and
blood of the Lord.
19. **But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of**
that bread, and drink of that cup.
20. **For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and**
drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's
body.

The word translated here as "damnation" should more accurately be "condemnation." The Christian who "*eateth and drinketh unworthily*''[1] isn't going to be damned, but he is under condemnation: "*He drinketh condemnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.*" "*For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep*" (v. 30).

This infers that there shouldn't be any physically weak or sickly among the Corinthians; all should be well and strong. Many died prematurely. They could have lived by rightly "discerning the Lord's body."

These Corinthian Christians were partaking of the Lord's Supper unworthily. They had come to some meetings and had drunk enough wine to get drunk. Their manner was wrong. They weren't rightly discerning the Lord's body.

Paul says in verses 33 and 34, "*Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat,*

tarry one for another. And if any man hunger,
let him eat at home; that ye come not

together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come."

Our attitude and manner of observing the Lord's Supper should be right. Otherwise, we will bring condemnation upon ourselves.

Paul's statement that some are sick and some have died prematurely because they have not rightly discerned the Lord's Body has a twofold application.

First, when they took the Communion bread, they didn't discern that it was His Body broken for them. They thought of it only as a piece of bread. As they took the bread, they should have believed that they were appropriating unto themselves what the Lord did for them, for "by His stripes we are healed." If they failed to discern that, they still would be weak and sickly.

Second, there is a spiritual application. We need to discern that the Lord's Body spiritually is "one," and that every born-again Christian, whether a member of our particular church or not, is a member of Christ's Body. Then we must walk in love one toward another, or we will bring condemnation upon ourselves.

The reason there is so much sickness in some churches is because the people don't walk in love. When the preacher of one congregation fights other congregations, he is opening his own church to condemnation.

During the summer of 1953 we were ministering in a tent meeting in another state. A minister whom I knew and esteemed highly was building a revival center adjacent to our tent. When I saw him there one day, I went over to visit with him. After we had talked a while, we both got in our cars to leave.

As I started to leave, the Lord told me to go back and tell this man that unless he judged himself on three things, he wasn't going to live much longer.

1 CORINTHIANS 11:31,32
21. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be
judged.
22. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord,
that we should not be condemned with the world.

The Lord told me that he must judge himself first on love, second on money, and third on diet.

Three years later we were at a convention when word came to pray for this man, for he was dying. All the ministers present were asked to come to the platform to pray for him. As I walked down the aisle, the Lord spoke to me and told me not to go up there and pray for him, because he was going to die.

I said, "Why, Lord? If he dies, it will hurt the healing ministry. He's an evangelist."

The Lord told me that the reason was because the man wouldn't judge himself. He wouldn't walk in love toward his fellow ministers. The Lord told me that He had turned him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh.

I turned around and walked back to my seat. I told my wife and some other ministers what the Lord had said to me.

Does that mean that it was God's perfect will for this man to die? No! Was it His will for the people of Corinth to be weak and sickly? No! It was His will that they judge themselves.

In 1954 we were called to pray for our pastor's father, a man of about 67 who had many physical disabilities. When I visited him, he didn't ask me to pray for his healing; he just asked that I pray with him.

I laid my hands on him and tried to pray for his healing, but I couldn't. I could only pray for the blessing and presence of God — and God's presence was real to all in that room.

This man had told his son that he didn't want to go

to the hospital, because he knew he was going to die. The doctor was called, however, and after examining him sent him to the hospital, where an operation was performed. Seven different malignant growths were found, and because there was no hope for his life, they sent him home.

The next time I went to see him, I took his hand as he was lying in bed and started praying for him. I still couldn't pray for his healing, however, and I asked the Lord why.

The Lord told me that He had been waiting 35 years for this man to judge himself and put away his sins. The Lord showed me that although this man had been saved when he was 32 years old, he had never lived right more than two weeks at a time. He wouldn't judge himself.

The Lord told me He had turned him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. The Lord then told me to lay hands on him and he would be filled with the Spirit, making his last days better than his first.

I opened my eyes and told the man what I was going to do. Instantly as I laid hands on him, he began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit of God gave him utterance, and I left him sitting up in bed singing in other tongues. He had a beautiful glow on his face.

As we got in our car and left, I started singing "Grace that is greater than all our sins ...." I had seen a display of God's grace that day.

Not long after that, the man died. I was told that he sat up in bed and sang for three days after I left him. How much better it would have been if he had made a dedication to God 35 years earlier.

Just because someone has missed God a few times doesn't mean that God is going to punish him. However, if a person persists in wrongdoing over a long period of time, he eventually will be judged.

A similar experience happened to our pastor's brother-

in-law, who was dying with cancer in both lungs at the age of 42.

When I tried to pray for him, I felt the Lord lift my hand off him. I asked the Lord why He didn't want me to pray for this man, and the Lord said the man was going to die because God had been waiting for 30 years for this man to judge himself.

The man had been saved when he was 12 years old, but had not put away his sin.

God told me that He had judged him and turned him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh so that his spirit would be saved. During such affliction, a man who has known God will call on Him and return to Him.

Such drastic measures are certainly not God's best or God's will. It was God's will that these men judge themselves and be well. It was God's will that the Christians at Corinth judge themselves and be well rather than die prematurely or be sickly. God tried to get this message to them through Paul.

The Bible declares that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. But we can stand in His presence and tell Him that we are open to Him and obedient to Him. If we have done wrong, our heart knows it. But if our heart doesn't condemn us, neither should we let anyone else condemn us. We can come with confidence to God and He will meet us.

Chapter 3 God's Recipe for Life and Health

> *My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.*
>
> *Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.*
>
> *For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.*
>
> — Proverbs 4:20-22

Two things that men strive for above everything else are life and health. In His Word God has given us a recipe to attain these. He tells us first that life comes only through the Word. The written Word is given to reveal the living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, to us.

Jesus is the living Word: "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made*" (John 1:1-3). The 14th verse continues, "*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.*" Jesus is the Word of God.

In John 10:10, Jesus said, ". ../ *am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.* " That is the reason why Jesus came: that man might have life.

Jesus didn't come to give mankind some new rules to use to climb a heavenly stairway to the glory world. Jesus didn't come to give man a new code of conduct. He didn't come to bring man a system of teaching that would enable him to become God-like. Jesus came to bring life. He came that we might have life "more abundantly."

Our text in Proverbs begins, "attend to my words." Not only are we to listen to Jesus and to look at Jesus, but the written Word also unveils Him to us; particularly

as we read the epistles.

No one could live in the four Gospels alone and be a successful Christian. The four Gospels are a history of the life of Jesus: His work, His sayings, and His deeds. In the Gospels we see Jesus dying, but if we don't go further than the Gospels, we wouldn't know *why* He died.

Even after Jesus had been crucified and was raised from the dead, His disciples asked, "*Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*" (Acts 1:6). They were still looking for an earthly kingdom and thought He would restore the kingdom to Israel.

It is in the epistles where we read what this living Word, Christ, wrought for us. Second Corinthians 5:21 says, "*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*"

It is in the epistles where we read, "*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree*" (Gal. 3:13).

It is in the epistles where we read, "*For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*" (Rom. 6:23).

Back in Proverbs, the writer, inspired by the Holy Spirit, said, "*Attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.* " If you want to walk in the fullness of life, first of all give God's Word your undivided attention. Put away everything else from your mind; accept God's Word; and act upon what His Word says.

God has told us, "*incline thine ear unto my sayings.* " We are to open our ears to God's sayings and close our ears to everything else. We are to listen to what God has to say. By believing it and accepting it, His Word will work for us.

While praying to the Father, Jesus said, "..
.thy word

is truth" (*John* 17:17). Jesus also said, "*Andye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*" (John 8:32). No man will ever know life, freedom, and truth without knowing God's Word. That has a twofold application, because Jesus *is* the Word of God. He is called the Word of God.

You begin to know Jesus personally by accepting Him as your Savior. But you will never know the living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ in His fullness, without knowing the written Word of God.

Too many people try to understand God by feelings. Smith Wigglesworth said, "I cannot understand God by feelings. I cannot understand the Lord Jesus Christ by feelings. I understand God, I understand the Lord Jesus Christ, through the Word of God. He is everything the Word says He is. Get acquainted with God through the Word. Get acquainted with the Lord Jesus Christ through the Word."

Our text continues, "*Let them* [my words] *not depart from thine eyes.*" We are to look as well as to listen; to keep our vision fixed upon Jesus. He is the Word. Continue to feed upon this written Word, and Jesus the living Word will become more real to you every day.

When it comes to healing, we also should keep our vision fixed on Jesus. The Holy Spirit always will lead and guide us in line with the Word.

A number of years ago I was troubled with alarming physical symptoms just before bedtime. I knelt by my bedside to pray and claim the appropriate promises of God regarding healing. Then I got into bed, but these symptoms only grew worse.

I continued to praise God for healing and finally managed to fall asleep. Almost immediately I was awakened by these symptoms. Finally I said, "Lord, I just don't know how much longer I can take this."

I continued to praise Him, and soon fell asleep again. However, I was awakened the third time. Then, in my spirit I heard the words "Consider not." The Scripture from Romans 4 concerning Abraham was given to me.

I began to rejoice, because I knew the Word. It said that Abraham "*considered not his own body now dead,... neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb ... but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform*" (vv. 19-21).

I knew that Abraham had God's promise that Isaac would be born. In fact, God didn't say He *was going to do it;* He said, "/ *have made thee* the father of many nations." He sees the future better than we see the past. He speaks as if it is already done, because in His sight it *is* done.

Abraham's physical senses told him it was impossible to father a child at his age (about 100 years old), yet "he considered not his own body." My struggle was with appropriating physical healing in my body as alarming physical symptoms persisted. But I didn't pay any attention to my body; I rejoiced in the promise of God.

Symptoms and pain persisted, however, and finally I said, "Lord, I am not considering my body. I am keeping my mind off it as much as I can, praising You, but it is a little difficult, and I don't seem to be making much progress."

The Holy Spirit spoke again and said, "Consider Him." I knew again that this is in the Word: "*Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus*" (Heb. 3:1).

First I had His Word that said "Consider not," and I was considering not, but I wasn't considering Him.

Some think, *If1 close my eyes, the problem will go*

away. But at the same time the Bible tells you not to consider the things that are against you, it tells you what you should consider: "Consider Him."

I began to consider Him. I began to consider the Word that said, "*Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses*[1]" (Matt. 8:17). I began to consider Isaiah 53:4 as found in Dr. Isaac Leeser's literal Hebrew translation: "Our *diseases* did he bear himself, and our *pains* he carried: while we indeed esteemed him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted."

I began to look back and see God lay my sickness and my pains on Jesus. Soon I fell into a deep sleep. I rested well, and awakened the next morning with all my symptoms gone.

Many would agree that God is interested in our spiritual life and health, but I am so glad that our text says, "*My words... are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.*" God is interested in our physical health as well as our spiritual health.

Man still continues the age-old search for remedies to bring health. Millions and millions are spent each year, and many have dedicated their lives to find the cure for certain diseases that take their toll of humanity.

But God sent His Son into this world as a revelation of His will, and He called His Son His Word. The writer of Hebrews said, "*God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son ... .* " (Heb. 1:1,2).

Jesus is God speaking to us. If you want to hear God, hear Jesus.

One day Jesus approached a lonely leper who cried, "*Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.*"

Jesus said, "I will." That says it forever! That is God speaking! He said, "*/ will; be thou clean*"(Matt. 8:3). And

that man was healed. That's my Jesus!

Unfortunately, many have not been taught that it is possible for us today to be healed through the Word, by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Many years ago as I lay on the bed of sickness as a boy of 16, having been given up to die by the best doctors in the land, I didn't know the answer. But something inside me told me I would find the answer in the Bible, so I was never without that Book.

I read it by day and slept with it by night. God's Word is truth and life. Not only did He say His words are life unto those who find them, but He also said they are health to all their flesh.

My mind couldn't understand it, but my heart believed it. And, thank God, my flesh did become healthy. I was and am healed.

If we follow the Spirit, He is bound to lead us in line with the Word. And the Word, because it is Spirit anointed and Spirit guided, will lead us in the same direction, because the Spirit and the Word agree.

"*My son.. . incline thine ear unto my sayings . .. keep them in the midst of thine heart.* " I knew in my heart that I was healed before my body knew it or responded to it. If a man knows the Word, he knows in his heart that he is saved even before there is any evidence of salvation. Why? Because he has God's Word for it and accepts that in his heart. That is what causes the evidence of salvation to come forth: believing the Word in your heart.

Many have put "the cart before the horse," as the saying goes. They want to have some kind of feeling first. They want some kind of evidence; then they think they will know they are saved. But salvation starts on the inside.

"*Keep them* [my words] *in the midst of thine heart.* " As you believe the Word in your heart and keep it in your

heart, it will cause this life to spring up. And if you feed upon the Word, it will feed that life or nature of God that is in you so you can enjoy and walk in the light of life.

The same thing is true of physical healing. I knew in my innermost being that I was healed, and I praised God for my healing. My heart still didn't beat right, and my body still was partially paralyzed, but I kept that Word in the midst of my heart.

It starts in your heart. The Bible says concerning salvation, "*That ifthou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*" (Rom. 10:9,10).

This life comes first in your heart. It is a mistake to start looking at your body to see if you are healed. It starts in your heart; in your spirit. God heals you through your spirit. God is a Spirit. God can only contact us through our spirits. We can only contact God through our spirits.

Jesus said, "*The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life*" (John 6:63). We can make contact with God through the Word, for God is the Word. This Word of God is a God-breathed, God-inspired, God-indwelt message. He said, "Keep them." Keep these God-inspired words in your heart.

What will they do for you? "*They are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.* "

Someone asked me, "Brother Hagin, do you ever feel bad?"

"Yes, once in a while."

"What do you do?"

"I always double up on my Bible reading, for '*They* [my words] *are life... and health.*"

His Word will heal you. Psalm 107:20 says, "*He sent his word, and healed them.*" The Word in the Old Testa-

ment was sent through the prophets. The New Testament is the living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ.

I have that living Word within me. As Paul said, "*Christ in you, the hope of glory*" (Col. 1:27).

The more I feed upon this written Word, the more real that living Word becomes in me, and the more I learn how to appropriate what He is in me. He is there all the time.

You have the Healer in you. Consider Him. He is there. Believe He is there. Believe He is working in you.