

Six Potential Errors Regarding “Faith-Healing”

- 1. “Healers” alone control God’s healing of the body.** Rather, any individual Christian or group of Christians can come to God in faith, without an intermediary, and request healing from God. The request can be for themselves or for others (Matthew 7:7-13, Acts 2:42, James 5:13-16).
- 2. Sickness is never in the will of God.** Rather, divine chastisement (or *discipline* as we more commonly say now days) should not be rejected. By allowing pain and suffering, God often tests us and matures our faith. Examples would include Job’s suffering (Job 1-2), the man born blind (John 9:1-12), and Paul’s thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 12:7-10).
- 3. Medical remedies are against the will of God.** The perversion brought on by this error can be far-reaching. “Medicine, to be sure, is usually the supply of elements needed in the system for its recovery. Hence to use remedies for healing is no different in principle than to feed the body with food or to clothe it for warmth.” (Chafer, p. 185). Medical help is within the scope of God’s provision for His children through the talents and gifts He bestows upon skilled individuals. Medicine and the skill of medical personnel are praiseworthy, indirect methods for God to heal the sick and diseased. Medical missions and the work of Christian physicians and hospitals have proven this life-giving method to be a tremendous witness for God for many centuries.
- 4. Personal faith is always required for healing.** While personal faith in healing through answered prayer is normative, it is not universally required. Some instances of healing in the Bible happen because of the faith of another person (Matthew 8:5-13). Further, some instances of healing do not appear to require faith of anyone at all (Matthew 8:14-15). The emphasis on healing through answered prayers should be upon God who has the power to heal, not upon the person who has the faith.
- 5. Physical healing on earth was guaranteed by the atonement.** Rather, physical healing and redemption of our bodies is guaranteed in heaven, but not on earth. Physical healing on earth is a blessing to man which brings glory to God; but in no way is God required to heal, even when great faith by a human is expressed. God is not beholden to men. He has His purposes which are sometimes mysterious (Romans 11:33).
 - a. Romans 8:22-23** is the anchor verse for this truth. “*We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.*”
 - b. Matthew 8:17** quotes from Isaiah 53:4 these words: “*This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: ‘He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases.’*” The point of this verse in Matthew was to show that during Jesus’ earthly ministry this prophecy was fulfilled. It was fulfilled before Jesus got to the cross. Indeed in Isaiah 53, verses 1-4 are a description of Jesus before He was crucified; Isaiah 53:5-6 describe the crucifixion.
 - c. 1 Peter 2:24** quotes from Isaiah 53:5 these words: “*He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*” The guarantee in this verse is spiritual. By His wounds we die to sin (technically) so that we can stop sinning (practically). The context of 1 Peter 2:24 does not embrace guaranteed physical healing on earth. This notion squares with the division in Isaiah 53 (verses 1-4 speak of Jesus’ earthly ministry, verses 5-6 speak of the atonement).
- 6. God’s blessing is only revealed in health and wealth.** While it is proverbially (and usually practically) true that when we follow God’s instructions, we will be more healthy and better able to handle our finances, we must not fall into the trap of making this universal. God will also use sickness and poverty to display His strength (Philippians 3:7-11, 2 Cor.12:9-10).