

## Questions about Healing (Part 3)

by Bayless Conley

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Hi there. My name is Bayless Conley, and I'm going to invite you to spend the next few minutes with me while we talk about something that's very important. We're going to be talking about the subject of healing. It's important because, at some point in everyone's life, they're going to need this message for themselves or for someone else. In the Bible, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, are just myriads of examples of the fact that God is a healer. Interesting, in the Old Testament, in the book of Exodus, before God even gave His people the Ten Commandments, He revealed to them that He was their healer.

He said, "I am Jehovah Rapha. The Lord who heals you." It's almost like a mother who tends to the health and the physical well-being of her child before she sees to that child's education. I believe that it's a revelation of how, early on in our relationship with God, He wants us to know that He is a healer. Jesus said, "If you've seen Me, you've seen the Father." His life, His attitude, and His actions are a revelation of the Father's heart. As you read through the Gospels, much of His time was spent healing the sick. He ministered to the multitudes. They brought the sick to Him, and He healed them all.

We have all the individual stories where Jesus sometimes went out of His way to bring healing to someone. In these stories, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament, we find questions. Sometimes, they're questions that the Lord asks in the midst of the story about healing. Sometimes it's a question that people ask. Sometimes, there's just this sort of inherent question embedded in the story. What we're doing is what we actually began in the last program. If you missed that, you can go to our YouTube channel or you can go to our website, and you can find it. Look it up. I think it would be well worth you taking the time to sit down and go through the previous questions that we've covered.

We now come to, actually, the 7th, if you're keeping score, question that we find in one of the stories recorded about healing. We're going to look at this question as we did all the other ones from last time. We're just going to think about it and talk about it. Like I said, this is incredibly important. Right now, you might say, "Well, look, I don't need that. I'm healthy." That is awesome, and you ought to thank God for it every day. If you are without pain, if you are free from sickness in your life, you ought to be giving glory to God because there's some people that it's been so long for them since they've had a pain-free day or a sickness-free day. They do not remember what it's like to be whole, to be complete, or to be healed.

It's something that we should thank God for. But as I said earlier, the day will come when we will need this message for ourselves or for someone else. We come to this next question, and it's found in John 5. I want to read verses 1–6, and the question is actually asked by the Lord himself. John 5, beginning in verse 1 NKJV says,

<sup>1</sup> After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup> Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. <sup>3</sup> In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind,

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lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. <sup>4</sup> For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had. <sup>5</sup> Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. <sup>6</sup> When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?"

What a question. "Do you want to be made well?" Isn't it obvious? Hey, the guy is sick. Don't sick people want to be made well? He's at the pool. The only reason people laid around that pool was to wait for the water to be stirred up, when the angel came and troubled the water. He's there at the pool. What kind of a question is that? That actually borders on being offensive, Lord. Why would You ask a sick person, do you want to be made well? It's obvious because he's there at the pool. It says, "When Jesus saw him lying there, and He knew that he'd been in that condition a long time," I don't think that necessarily means that the Lord supernaturally knew by the Holy Spirit how long this guy had been sick.

I think anyone who would have come along would have known this guy had been in that condition a long time. Everything about him said it. His posture said it. The expression on his face and his countenance said it. Everything about him said, "I'm stuck. I've been in this condition a long time." Jesus asks him this question, "Do you want to be healed? Do you want to be made well? Do you really want it?" Some people say, "Well, yes, of course, I do. I'm in church." He was at the pool. "Do you want it?" See, because it is possible to not just be lying down on the outside, but it's possible to be lying down on the inside.

You can become so accustomed to your circumstance or your situation that you've sort of given up on the inside. We can go through all of the right motions outwardly. So that outwardly it looks like, yes, we're doing the necessary things. In his case, "Okay, I'm by the pool. I'm going through the motions." On the inside, he was lying down. In essence, Jesus sensed that this guy had laid down and given up on the inside. The guy's response was, "Well, I have no man. When the water stirs up while I'm coming, somebody gets in before me."

He's basically blaming his condition on other people. "I have no man. I'm in this state because of what someone else won't do for me. When I try to get in the pool, someone gets down there before me. It's not just because of what others haven't done for me; it's because of what others have done to me. Either way, it's not my fault." When we start blaming others and even blaming God for our lot in life or our circumstances, we are at a dead end. We are stuck. I want to ask you, and I want to do this as kindly as I might, and please take this in the spirit that I ask it. Because I know some people who are watching me right now have suffered.

I realize there are some people who are thinking, "Look, don't be cruel to me. Don't you dare give me hope." Friend, I want to give you hope. I don't believe it's cruel. The Bible says, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for." One translation says, "Faith gives substance to our hopes." If there's no hope, faith is hopeless. If there's no hope, faith has nothing to give substance to. Friend, both faith and hope are born of the Word of God.

When we read God's promises, when we look at stories like this, when it causes hope to come alive in our heart, and faith is what gives substance to that hope, and faith is the substance. "Faith comes by hearing," Romans 10:17, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Hope is the goal that's in front of us. It's the vision, the dream, if you would. Faith is what takes us to that. You could say that hope is like the blueprints of the building. Faith is the

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building material. Faith can make into a reality what's on the blueprints. Yes, I do. In the kindest of way, please take this right. I do want to get your hopes up. I do. I plead guilty.

I want to share with you about our amazing Jesus, what He can do, what He has done, and what He's still willing to do because He's the same yesterday, today, and forever. Listen to me. Don't feel condemned in any way because of your situation. That's not the point of this. That's the devil talking to you. You're on a journey. I'm on a journey. You, just in your heart, say, "Lord, I'm on my way. I'm going to take You at Your Word, and I'm going to trust You to do things in me, to build in me what's necessary to be built in me, so You can build things through me and for me and touch others through me."

We want to let God do this. Again, this first question: do you want to be made well? That's my question. Do you want things to turn around? Do you want to be healed? It's so important. Desire is so important. If that desire within you has died, you can go through all the motions. You can call for the elders and have them come pray over you and anoint you with oil. You can have hands laid on you. You can pray prayers from now until kingdom come. It won't do any good if there's not this burning desire within you for things to change. I remember this young lady. In fact, I just talked to her a couple of weeks ago. Now, this happened probably 38 years ago in the church and she wanted to come to church and get prayer for this family member. It was very important to her. Her car broke down, and she lives in another city. It's a nearby city, but it's 10–12 miles away.

The girl's car has broken down, but she's so desperate and so desirous to come get prayer. She gets a bicycle. Gets up early and rides all the way to church. She leaves her bike outside and comes in to get prayer. She really wanted it. You know what? God answered that prayer for her. I love the fact she's still in the church here, 38 years later. I talked to her and her kids. She didn't have any kids at the time. She was single. It was just a beautiful thing to see someone who stayed steady in the Lord all these years. I still remember praying for her. It was just this deep desire. So much so, that she was willing to do whatever she needed to do. She was expectant.

She had this great desire that drove her to grab a bicycle and ride it all the way. Some people say, "Well, if it was the Lord's Will, my car wouldn't have broken down. This must be a sign from God. Or, man, I've got a bike, but it's going to take me 40 minutes to ride over there. I'm not going to ride on the bike for 40 minutes. It's cold outside." But she did it. I think this is really an important question. Again, some people would say, "Lord, that borders on being offensive. You're actually asking a sick person, 'Do you want to be made well?' Someone who actually is doing the outward things necessary to be made well. You're asking them, 'Do you really want this?'" The Lord asked that question. It's one that we need to consider. In fact, one that we need to consider deeply.

All right, we move on to another story. This one is found in Mark's Gospel, the 10th chapter, beginning in verse 46. I'm just going to lay this out, talking about obvious things. Why do you need to ask this question? We are coming up on a doozy. At least, that's what we would say here. This one would almost just seem crazy. It is so obvious. Yet the Lord asked the question. Mark 10, beginning in verses 46–47, and it says this,

<sup>46</sup> Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging. <sup>47</sup> And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

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Now, that is a designation for the Messiah. You need to realize there were a lot of boys and men named Jesus in that day, a very common name. He hears, "This is Jesus of Nazareth." This blind man obviously heard about the works Jesus was doing. He put two and two together. He referred to Him as the Son of David, a designation for the Messiah. Verse 48,

<sup>48</sup> Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

All right. Talk about somebody who really wants something. Everybody said, "Look, you're disturbing people. You need to be quiet." He did just the opposite. He got louder, and he cried out more and more. Verses 49–50,

<sup>49</sup> So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, "Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you." <sup>50</sup> And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.

Now, just a side thought right here. You can read some commentaries, and they say that this blanket wasn't just something that would be used so you wouldn't shiver in the cold. It may have had that purpose, but some commentaries say this was a beggar's blanket. The blind man would sit begging, and he had his blanket, and people would throw coins onto that blanket. For him to have thrown away his blanket, according to some commentaries, it said, "All right. He's saying, 'I am through with this old life.'"

He is fully expectant to receive something from the Lord where he's not going to have to go back to his begging and his old lifestyle. I think that it's interesting. It's certainly worth considering because the Bible says faith without corresponding actions is dead. It's lifeless. It doesn't produce anything. Him throwing aside that blanket, and even if it wasn't this beggar's blanket, that was the way he made his living. If it was just something so he wouldn't shiver in the cold, the fact that he threw it aside is pretty significant because it's going to be hard for him. If he's not expecting to be healed to go back and find the blanket that he's chucked aside and walked through the crowd. Right away, we see actions that are corresponding to what this guy wants. He's been calling out for mercy. Verses 51–52,

<sup>51</sup> So Jesus answered and said to him, "What do you want Me to do for you?" The blind man said to Him, "Rabboni, that I may receive my sight." <sup>52</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.

A few things I like there. Once you get blessed by the Lord, man, you need to follow Him. He didn't get healed just so he could do his own thing. He began to follow Jesus, and when something happens to you, listen, the Lord doesn't heal you just so you can go back and play tennis. All right, enjoy your tennis game, but you need to follow Him. That needs to be the number one priority in your life.

Basically, and actually, you just need to follow Him because He is good. He is the Lord. He is the one and only Savior of the world. There are so many things in this story. We come back to the question. Jesus asked him, "What do you want Me to do for you?" Isn't it obvious, Jesus? The guy's crying out for mercy. It's obvious he's blind. They bring this blind guy over to Jesus and Jesus asks a ridiculous question. From a natural standpoint isn't it obvious, Jesus, that this guy wants to be healed? He said, "Lord, that I might receive my sight." It's interesting. Jesus said, "Your faith has made you well."

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Now he'd been crying out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me." He had faith in the mercy of Jesus. He is still the same compassionate, merciful Savior that He has ever been. He's our compassionate, merciful High Priest. We can come to Him in our time of need and find grace to help us, and mercy to help us in that moment of need, still today. Back to the question. "What do you want Me to do?" The guy could have answered anything. He could have said, "Well, Lord, I haven't gotten much through my begging lately. I'd really like for my finances to increase so I could enjoy some more good meals." Or, "Lord, I've had this headache for three weeks or whatever." He could have said anything, but Jesus wanted him to be specific. Faith is specific. Mark 11:24 KJV, Jesus said this,

<sup>24</sup> ...what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

What things? Clear-cut, specific things. Faith requires specificity. Faith requires us to be specific. Some people are so general in their praying that they wouldn't know the answer if it walked up to them and tapped them on the shoulder, and said, "Here I am." Don't be afraid to be specific. The book of James says, "You do not have because you do not ask." I think we can say because you do not ask specifically. I remember our children, and they are all adults now with families of their own, but when they were small, they would ask Daddy to get them something. It might have been a pair of shoes, or a shirt, or a toy. My kids were not afraid to be specific.

They told me the color they wanted. They told me the brand they wanted, or whatever it happened to be. I remember one time the boys asked me. I was going to preach in Minneapolis, Minnesota, at a friend's church. In the city of Minneapolis, they have what is called the Mall of America. At the time, it may still be, I don't know, but it was the largest mall in the United States. Four million square feet under one roof of shops, stores, and amusement stuff. My boys had asked me, they wanted a specific toy, a specific brand, and a specific thing. They don't want the knockoff. They wanted this toy.

I'm with my friend. I preach, and we go get lunch in the Mall of America. I say, "Hey, I need to get a toy for my boys." Man, I spent half of the afternoon at least walking around this 4 million square foot Mall looking for this toy. I went into toy store after toy store after toy store, and they didn't have it. Okay, we looked on the little map, and there's another toy store. It's on the other side of the Mall. We walked another 20 minutes over to this one, and they didn't have it. We look, "Okay, there's another toy store over here." We go to this department store and that. We looked and looked and looked because they were specific.

Be specific in your asking. Don't just pray, "Bless me, Lord." The Lord is going to say, "Look, I have millions of different blessings. What blessing do you want exactly?" Faith is specific. I had lunch with an old timer. He's one of the heroes of faith of a previous generation. He's been in heaven for a long time now. He's one of the men who changed the world, who helped shape the church, and did amazing things in world missions, broadcasting the gospel via airwaves, and just really a legend of the faith. I was very privileged to get to know him. And he and I are sharing a meal together one day at lunch. I said, "Listen, I'm a young minister, and I need wisdom. Can you share some things that will help me?"

I'll never forget. He looked at me, and he said, "Son, you're going to have to be more specific than that." I realized, yes, I just like opened the gates up and said, "Anything you want to say to me?" He said, "No, be specific. What do you want wisdom in? Do you want me to talk to you



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about dealing with strife and troubled people in the church? Do you want me to talk to you about your prayer life? Do you want me to talk to you about principles of faith? Do you want me to talk to you about the need to download into the hearts of your people, a love for world missions, and a love for the world around them? What is it that you specifically want me to talk to you about?"

It helped me learn a lesson that day. We need to articulate what it is that we need from the Lord. If it's healing, be specific. It's like, "Lord, I need my blood sugar levels to be normal. Lord, I need to receive my sight. Lord, I need healing from this sinus problem." Be specific. The story of this blind man, Bartimaeus, who cried out for mercy, reminds me of something that happened many years ago. We took a team of people from the church and went down to Mexico to do some short-term mission work. We're down there for a few days with a friend of mine who was a missionary. He still is a missionary in Mexico to this day.

We went into a mountainous area, a bit remote. There was a very, very large village in this mountain area that had sort of like little shacks. Just probably a few thousand of them scattered over the hills and down in this valley. Our assignment was for the next four hours to go two by two, and you would just knock on the door of the little village church. Each group had someone who spoke Spanish. You'd say, "Hi, we're just here. Is there anything that you need prayer for? Can we pray for you for anything?" It was really an amazing day because virtually everyone invited us into their humble abode.

Many of them would ask us if we wanted food, but we weren't there to eat. Generally, we turned that down and said, "No, we're just here to be a blessing to you. We want to pray for you." I went with a person I was with. We went to a lot of different little homes, and we prayed for a lot of people for different things. Then we're going to meet back where the vehicles were. There were no paved roads. It was all dirt roads. There were big, little crevices everywhere where the rain had come and eaten away the dirt roads there. What the guy had done that was leading the way, this missionary, was stack up all these tires, and he'd put a big speaker up on the top of these tires. He'd hooked the speaker up to, and just to tell you how long ago it was, a little cassette player.

He had this cassette tape, and it was of a guy preaching in Spanish. He was preaching a healing message. He was just blaring it over the speakers. You could hear it over the whole village. We get back, and we're standing around, and we notice there's this guy making his way slowly up; it was sort of a steep, dirt road with little cracks and crevices. If you weren't careful, you could twist an ankle very easily. He makes his way up there, and we realize the man is blind. He can't see. A group of us went down to him, and we asked him, "Can we help you?" He says, "I want to meet the man who's preaching right now. Take me to the man who is preaching. I need him to pray for me."

We said, "Señor, es una grabadora. Sir, it's a tape recorder. There's not anybody really there. It's a recording." We asked him, "Can we pray for you?" He said, "Yes. I want to receive my sight. I believe God can heal me." He was stone blind. A bunch of people gathered around him in a circle, laid hands on him, and prayed for him. Right in front of us, God opened that man's eyes. Somebody handed him a Bible, and he began to read from it. I'll never forget it as long as I live. He's reading the Scriptures, and he clutched the Bible to his chest. He began to sob. He fell to his knees on that dirt road.

He said over and over, "Gracias mi señor. Gracias mi señor, gracias. Thank you, my Lord. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord." God had opened his eyes, but I do remember he was very specific in his asking, and we need to be specific. What is it that you want? I hope that you've

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gotten something from today's lesson. I look forward to seeing you next time. Until then, I pray that God's richest and His best would be yours always. See you again!

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