



Healing/
Recovery

HEALING AND RECOVERY

DAN ALLENDER

(James 5:14)

Everyone needs healing, because everyone is born into sin. In addition, in this fallen world people face hurts, pain, sickness, difficulties, and traumas. People are broken by the sins of others, as well as by their own. Sin tears apart the fabric of relationships and mars the wholeness of intimacy. When broken, people are alienated from themselves, others, and God. Evil infiltrates, dividing the parts and scattering them to increase the sense of alienation through felt distance and misunderstanding.

The result is not only a profound inner emptiness, but also a tendency to fend for oneself while rejecting others' care and involvement. Needing and trusting becomes too risky. The more one is broken and wounded, the more one ventures down the spiral of isolation and independence from others. These behaviors involve an interplay of arrogance ("I can do it on my own") and self-righteousness ("Whatever went wrong, it's not my fault"), resulting in greater blindness and self-deception. Broken and wounded people need healing that comes from a renewed relationship with God and with others.

THE MYSTERY OF HEALING

Jesus heals through His wounds. The prophet Isaiah foresaw this when he wrote of Jesus, "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed" (Is. 53:5). Peter understood this as he also wrote that Jesus "bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes [we] were healed" (1 Pet. 2:24). People are reconciled to God through Jesus' suffering. Because of this, we have the possibility of seeing that which was once divided and scattered brought back together, healed.

When people accept Christ's sacrifice on their behalf, when they embrace His broken body, their hearts are opened to recover a personal relationship with Him. The mystery of His love compels people to face the depths of their brokenness and alienation. God's kindness breaks people's hearts over their sin, irresistibly draws their souls to His provision, and helps them to seek healing and recovery.

In order to heal people's lives, God must perform major surgery. In the process of healing them, He exposes the rampant sinfulness that He died to cure. The process of healing and recovery is not always easy, nor is it instantaneous. Deep wounds will take time to heal. Sin is embedded in every fiber of people's beings. The healing process means going "under the knife" of the Master Surgeon to allow Him to deal with the sickness. Only then can people be healed and begin the process of recovery.

THE PARADOX OF HEALING

No one will experience complete healing and recovery until they go to glory in heaven. Christ died for people's sins, and those who accept that sacrifice are considered righteous before God. However, people must still struggle with the sin nature, and they need to come to God daily for healing and recovery from sin. People's bodies, souls, and relationships will continue to

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groan for the healing that will only be experienced in the presence of God. So, in a very real sense, God's people are already healed, but not yet healed. This paradox is beyond our human comprehension.

Another paradox exists in the need for healing. James encourages believers to pray over sick people, anointing them with oil (James 5:14). Clearly, God should be petitioned when people are ill. However, this is not a formula for certain recovery; it is submission to God regarding His will for that person. God may choose not to heal. Why? Because that very illness, that weakness that so disturbs, can be used by God to help people. God took Paul's physical weakness, for example, and used it to glorify Himself. Paul wrote, "A thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me. . . . I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient

My strength is made perfect in weakness'" (2 Cor. 12:7-9). Though Paul had repeatedly asked that the "thorn" be removed, God told Paul that He would make His power perfect through Paul's weakness. God did not leave Paul helpless, however. God promised His grace to help Paul endure through his struggles. (That promise is extended to us as well.) Paul could gladly boast about his weakness so that Christ's power would rest on him: "For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:10).

In other words, when we can't do it alone, then we have to depend on God to do it in us. Therefore, we can boast, not about being healed, but about being weak enough for God to use. God's work of healing and recovery is not always to take away our wounds; rather, His work may simply be to enable us to join with Christ in His suffering and to glorify Himself through it.

We may ask God to heal, and rejoice if He does so. We may also rejoice, how-

ever, when He chooses instead to use our weaknesses as a platform to display His grace and power in our lives. Through suffering, we may bring help and hope to others who are suffering in the same way. We can then point them to our Savior. Through our wounds, others may be invited to make an appointment with the Great Physician.

FURTHER

Other passages to study about the issue of healing/recovery include:

- > Exodus 15:26
- > 2 Kings 20:1-11
- > Psalms 18:6-19; 41:4; 103:3
- > Isaiah 43:2
- > Jeremiah 3:22; 30:17
- > Malachi 4:2
- > 1 Corinthians 12:9

To Learn More: Turn to the key passage note on healing/recovery at James 5:14-16 on page 1650. See also the personality profile of Peter on page 1411.

boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

¹⁷Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.

RICH OPPRESSORS WILL BE JUDGED

5 Come now, *you* rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon *you!* ²Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. ³Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days. ⁴Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.^a ⁵You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as^a in a day of slaughter. ⁶You have condemned, you have murdered the just; he does not resist you.

BE PATIENT AND PERSEVERING

⁷Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See *how* the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. ⁸You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

⁹Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned.^a Behold, the Judge is standing at the door! ¹⁰My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. ¹¹Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

¹²But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your “Yes” be “Yes,” and your “No,” “No,” lest you fall into judgment.^a

MEETING SPECIFIC NEEDS

¹³Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. ¹⁴Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶Confess your trespasses^a to one another, and

5:4 ^aLiterally, in Hebrew, *Hosts* 5:5 ^aNU-Text omits *as*. 5:9 ^aNU-Text and M-Text read *judged*. 5:12 ^aM-Text reads *hypocrisy*. 5:16 ^aNU-Text reads *Therefore confess your sins*.

KEY PASSAGE



Healing/ Recovery

PRAYER FOR HEALING

(5:14-16)

The anointing by the elders described here is a valuable show of support for a sick person. The oil has no magic, nor does the touch of the elders. And James is not saying that Christians should avoid doctors or medicines, for God works through those as well. Instead, this ceremony focuses on placing complete faith in God. And when a sick person knows that others are praying for them, that person feels supported and loved.

If healing is to occur, the Lord will do it. Sometimes He performs a miracle that cannot be explained naturally; sometimes He works through doctors and medicines; sometimes it's just the body's natural, God-given healing processes at work. And then there are cases where God performs the ultimate healing by taking the person to be with Him. The true “prayer of faith” acknowledges God's sovereignty over each person's life. The prayer offered in faith reveals complete trust in God to do His will. Healing prayer should be sought by all those who hurt.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about healing/recovery on pages 1652, 1653. See also the personality profile of Peter on page 1411.

had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?"

²¹Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, "But Lord, what *about* this man?"

²²Jesus said to him, "If I will that he remain till I come, what *is that* to you? You follow Me."

²³Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die,

but, "If I will that he remain till I come, what *is that* to you?"

²⁴This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true.

²⁵And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.

PERSONALITY PROFILE



Healing/ Recovery

PETER: A JOB TO DO

(JOHN 21:15)

Peter had denied Christ and wept bitterly upon realizing what he had done (Matt. 26:75). Sorrowful, sick, and hurting, Peter could have separated himself from the other disciples; he could have killed himself (as Judas did). But somehow he swallowed his pride and returned to his fellow disciples—meeting with them behind closed doors and fishing with them on that early morning when Jesus appeared on the shore.

Jesus had special words for Peter, because Peter had a special need to be healed and restored from his sin. Surely Peter's heart had been broken by his own weakness in denying his friend and Savior. Three times, Peter had denied knowing Jesus; and three times, Jesus asked him, "Do you love Me?" Jesus forgave Peter and restored him to ministry. The three charges, "Feed My lambs . . . Tend My sheep . . . Feed My sheep," reveal the ministry Peter would have in helping the believers who would join them. Clearly Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost and the addition of three thousand believers to the church gave Peter a lot of sheep to tend and feed with spiritual food!

No matter how deep the stain of our sin, Christ can forgive and heal us. He also can restore us to service for Him.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about healing/recovery on pages 1652, 1653. See also the key passage note at James 5:14-16 on page 1650.

done *what was good* in Your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

⁴And it happened, before Isaiah had gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying, ⁵"Return and tell Hezekiah the leader of My people, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD. ⁶And I will add to your days fifteen years. I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for My own sake, and for the sake of My servant David.'"

⁷Then Isaiah said, "Take a lump of figs." So they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered.

⁸And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "What is the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up to the house of the LORD the third day?"

⁹Then Isaiah said, "This is the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing which He has spoken: *shall* the shadow go forward ten degrees or go backward ten degrees?"

¹⁰And Hezekiah answered, "It is an easy thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees; no, but let the shadow go backward ten degrees."

¹¹So Isaiah the prophet cried out to the LORD, and He brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down on the sundial of Ahaz.

THE BABYLONIAN ENVOYS

¹²At that time Berodach-Baladan^a the son of Baladan, king of Babyion, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that Hezekiah had been sick. ¹³And Hezekiah was attentive to them, and showed them all the

house of his treasures—the silver and gold, the spices and precious ointment, and all^a his armory—all that was found among his treasures. There was nothing in his house or in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them.

¹⁴Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah, and said to him. "What did these messengers say, and from where did they come to you?"

So Hezekiah said, "They came from a far country, from Babylon."

¹⁵And he said, "What have they seen in your house?"

So Hezekiah answered, "They have seen all that is in my house; there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them."

¹⁶Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the LORD: ¹⁷'Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,' says the LORD. ¹⁸'And they shall take away some of your sons who will descend from you whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.'"

¹⁹So Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The word of the LORD which you have spoken is good!" For he said, "Will there not be peace and truth at least in my days?"

DEATH OF HEZEKIAH

²⁰Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah—his might, and how he made a pool and a tunnel and brought water into the city—are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? ²¹So Hezekiah rested with his fathers. Then Manasseh his son reigned in his place.

20:12 ^aSpelled *Merodach-Baladan* in Isaiah 39:1

20:13 ^aFollowing many Hebrew manuscripts, Syriac, and Targum; Masoretic Text omits *all*.

SOUL NOTE



Ultimate Healing (20:1-11) God does not heal every person who prays for healing. He does, however, heal many who ask. Hezekiah's experience teaches the importance of throwing ourselves on God's mercy. God can and does still heal. He has the power to do so. At times healing a person is within His plan; at other times it is not. We must always remember, however, that total and permanent healing will come when we see Him face to face. God will work in our brokenness to show His deep love and give His abiding peace. **Topic: Healing/Recovery**

Like chaff that passes away;
 Yes, it shall be in an instant,
 suddenly.
 You will be punished by the LORD of
 hosts
 With thunder and earthquake and great
 noise,
 With storm and tempest
 And the flame of devouring fire.
 The multitude of all the nations who
 fight against Ariel,
 Even all who fight against her and her
 fortress,
 And distress her,
 Shall be as a dream of a night vision.
 It shall even be as when a hungry man
 dreams,
 And look—he eats;
 But he awakes, and his soul is still
 empty;
 Or as when a thirsty man dreams,
 And look—he drinks;
 But he awakes, and indeed *he is faint*,
 And his soul still craves:
 So the multitude of all the nations shall
 be,
 Who fight against Mount Zion.”

BLINDNESS OF DISOBEDIENCE

Pause and wonder!
 Blind yourselves and be blind!
 They are drunk, but not with wine;
 They stagger, but not with intoxicating
 drink.
 For the LORD has poured out on you
 The spirit of deep sleep,
 And has closed your eyes, namely, the
 prophets;
 And He has covered your heads, *namely*,
 the seers.

¹¹The whole vision has become to you like
 the words of a book that is sealed, which *men*
 deliver to one who is literate, saying, “Read
 this, please.”

And he says, “I cannot, for it *is* sealed.”

¹²Then the book is delivered to one who is
 illiterate, saying, “Read this, please.”

And he says, “I am not literate.”

¹³Therefore the Lord said:

“Inasmuch as these people draw near
 with their mouths
 And honor Me with their lips,
 But have removed their hearts far from
 Me,
 And their fear toward Me is taught by
 the commandment of men,

¹⁴ Therefore, behold, I will again do a
 marvelous work

Among this people,
 A marvelous work and a wonder;
 For the wisdom of their wise *men* shall
 perish,
 And the understanding of their prudent
 men shall be hidden.”

¹⁵ Woe to those who seek deep to hide
 their counsel far from the LORD,
 And their works are in the dark;
 They say, “Who sees us?” and, “Who
 knows us?”

¹⁶ Surely you have things turned around!
 Shall the potter be esteemed as the
 clay;
 For shall the thing made say of him who
 made it,

“He did not make me”?

Or shall the thing formed say of him
 who formed it,

“He has no understanding”?

SOUL NOTE



Completely Healed (29:18, 19) Isaiah promised that a day would come when the deaf would hear, the blind would see, and the humble and the poor would “rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.” These promises were initially fulfilled in the healings performed by Jesus, for through Him many were healed from various diseases, and the poor heard the Good News of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 11:5). Jesus’ ministry and His healings were a sign that He was the promised Messiah. The promises will be fulfilled in heaven when God’s people will be completely healed.

Topic: Healing/Recovery

- 16 O Lord, by these *things men* live;
And in all these *things is* the life of my
spirit;
So You will restore me and make me
live.
- 17 Indeed *it was* for my own peace
That I had great bitterness;
But You have lovingly *delivered* my soul
from the pit of corruption,
For You have cast all my sins behind
Your back.
- 18 For Sheol cannot thank You,
Death cannot praise You;
Those who go down to the pit cannot
hope for Your truth.
- 19 The living, the living man, he shall
praise You,
As I *do* this day;
The father shall make known Your truth
to the children.
- 20 "The LORD *was ready* to save me;
Therefore we will sing my songs with
stringed instruments
All the days of our life, in the house of
the LORD."

²¹Now Isaiah had said, "Let them take a lump of figs, and apply *it* as a poultice on the boil, and he shall recover."

²²And Hezekiah had said, "What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the LORD?"

THE BABYLONIAN ENVOYS

39 At that time Merodach-Baladan^a the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that he had been sick and had recovered. ²And Hezekiah was pleased with them, and showed them the house of his treasures—the silver and gold, the spices and precious ointment, and all his armory—all that was found among

his treasures. There was nothing in his house or in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them.

³Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah, and said to him, "What did these men say, and from where did they come to you?"

So Hezekiah said, "They came to me from a far country, from Babylon."

⁴And he said, "What have they seen in your house?"

So Hezekiah answered, "They have seen that *is* in my house; there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them."

⁵Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: ⁶'Behold, the Egyptians are coming when all that *is* in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until today, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,' says the LORD. ⁷'And they shall carry away *some* of your sons who will descend to you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.'

Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The word of the LORD which you have spoken *is good!*" ⁸And he said, "At least there will be peace and quietness in my days."

GOD'S PEOPLE ARE COMFORTED

40 "Comfort, yes, comfort My people," Says your God.

² "Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her,

That her warfare is ended,
That her iniquity is pardoned;
For she has received from the LORD's hand
Double for all her sins."

³ The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

^{39:1} ^aSpelled *Berodach-Baladan* in 2 Kings 20:17

SOUL NOTE



Homemade Remedies (38:21) As he faced death, King Hezekiah cried out to the Lord (38:2, 3). The prophet Isaiah told the king to have his servants take a "lump of figs, and apply it as a poultice on the boil," promising that Hezekiah would recover. While God can heal miraculously, He also will work through medicines to heal people. When we pray for God to heal us, we can trust Him to use all the means available. It shows no lack of faith to utilize the benefit of doctors and hospitals.

Topic: Healing/Recovery

For those who do wickedness are raised
up;
They even tempt God and go free.³

A BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE

¹⁶ Then those who feared the LORD spoke
to one another,
And the LORD listened and heard *them*;
So a book of remembrance was written
before Him
For those who fear the LORD
And who meditate on His name.

¹⁷ “They shall be Mine,” says the LORD of
hosts,
“On the day that I make them My jewels.⁴
And I will spare them
As a man spares his own son who serves
him.”

¹⁸ Then you shall again discern
Between the righteous and the wicked,
Between one who serves God
And one who does not serve Him.

THE GREAT DAY OF GOD

4 “For behold, the day is coming,
Burning like an oven,
And all the proud, yes, all who do
wickedly will be stubble.
And the day which is coming shall burn
them up,”

Says the LORD of hosts,
“That will leave them neither root nor
branch.

But to you who fear My name
The Sun of Righteousness shall arise
With healing in His wings;
And you shall go out
And grow fat like stall-fed calves.
³ You shall trample the wicked,
For they shall be ashes under the soles
of your feet
On the day that I do *this*,”
Says the LORD of hosts.

“Remember the Law of Moses, My
servant,
Which I commanded him in Horeb for
all Israel,
With the statutes and judgments.
Behold, I will send you Elijah the
prophet
Before the coming of the great and
dreadful day of the LORD.
And he will turn
The hearts of the fathers to the children,
And the hearts of the children to their
fathers,
Lest I come and strike the earth with a
curse.”

3:17 ^aLiterally *special treasure*

SOUL NOTE



Healing in His Wings (4:2–4) Every person has needed healing at one time or another—whether it was a childhood scrape or a deep, emotional wound created by years of abuse. This imperfect world has caused many wounded hearts and souls searching for healing. Some look for healing in relationships, some in work, others in recreation. True healing, however, comes from God. One day, “the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings” to restore all things and to bring healing to wounded hearts. Whatever pain we face, healing can be found in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. **Topic: Healing/Recovery**

and come out of him!" ²⁶And when the unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him. ²⁷Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority" He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him." ²⁸And immediately His fame spread throughout all the region around Galilee.

PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW HEALED

²⁹Now as soon as they had come out of the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. ³⁰But Simon's wife's mother lay sick with a fever, and they told Him about her at once. ³¹So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her. And she served them.

MANY HEALED AFTER SABBATH SUNSET

³²At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. ³³And the whole city was gathered together at the door. ³⁴Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him

PREACHING IN GALILEE

³⁵Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. ³⁶And Simon and those *who were* with Him searched for Him. ³⁷When they found Him, they said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You."

³⁸But He said to them, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also. Because for this purpose I have come forth."

³⁹And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.

JESUS CLEANSSES A LEPER

⁴⁰Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, "You are willing, You can make me clean."

⁴¹Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed."

As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed. ⁴³And He sternly warned him and sent him away at once, ⁴⁴and said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go your way

Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.

MARK 1:35

show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

⁴⁵However, he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the matter, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places; and they came to Him from every direction.

JESUS FORGIVES AND HEALS A PARALYTIC

2 And again He entered Capernaum ¹after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house. ²Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them. ³Then they came

1:27 ^aNU-Text reads *What is this? A new doctrine with authority.* 2:2 ^aNU-Text omits *Immediate*

SOUL NOTE



Heal Our Souls (2:1-12) Before addressing the paralyzed man's physical need, Jesus addressed his spiritual need and forgave his sins. The astounded scribes exclaimed that only God could forgive sins. Jesus proved that He could indeed forgive sins by healing the man, an act that they could see. That unmistakable miracle of physical healing proved Jesus' identity and power. God has the power to heal. He may not always heal our physical needs, but He will always heal our souls when we come to Him in faith. **Topic: Healing/Recovery**