

the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him” (James 5:13-15). Prayer over the sick should be accompanied by faith, both in the person praying and in the person being prayed for. When it is, God answers!

God wants each of us to walk in close communion with Him so He can pour His blessings upon our lives—including the blessing of healing. As we approach Him, we need to make sure that our spiritual lives are in a condition where our faith in God can take hold. We must be assured that no sin or lack of surrender to God exists in our lives. We cannot come to God demanding or hoping to earn a self-shaped answer to our request by our great faith. Rather, we come basing our request upon the words Jesus expressed in His prayer, “Thy will be done.”

There may be times when God answers our prayer for healing with a supernatural act, but there may also be times when the illness or disease is not taken away immediately. God may want us to endure for a time, and this trial of our faith does not have to defeat us. In 1 Peter 1:7 we read, “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and

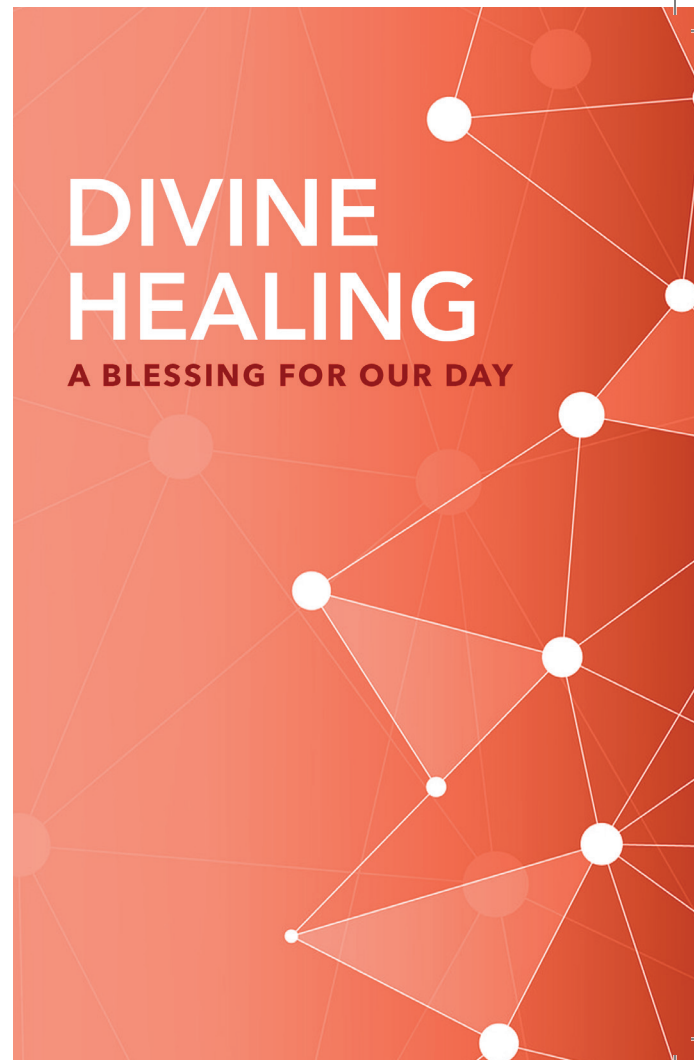
glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” If we truly trust in God, then we will offer our praise for whichever answer He sends, because we have confidence that He will choose what is best for us.

Are you afflicted today? Choose to trust in God, and He will not fail you.

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Does God still heal the sick? If you have ever walked through the valley of affliction, or have watched a loved one suffer in the grip of some painful or debilitating disease, you know the vital importance of the answer to this question.

In the Old Testament, we read of many instances when God performed miracles of healing. King Hezekiah was on his deathbed, but when he cried out to the Lord, God added fifteen years to his life. Naaman was healed of leprosy when he obeyed the instructions of God's prophet, Elisha. God healed Job of terrible boils when he prayed for his friends.

When Jesus lived on earth, multitudes came to Him and were healed of all kinds of diseases and afflictions. He healed Peter's mother-in-law of a fever. He healed the man, sick with palsy, who was let down through the roof. He cleansed lepers, restored sight to the blind, and cast out devils. We read in Matthew 12:15 that "great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all."

Does God's healing power still work today, or are these just Bible stories which happened thousands of years ago? Thank God, we can be assured that the day of miracles is not past! In Hebrews 13:8 we read that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. His healing power is never exhausted. He made our bodies,

and He is well able to mend and restore them. No form of illness or disease exists that He cannot heal. The most progressive methods of man may fail; the most notable achievements in the medical field still leave countless unanswered questions. Yet, "the things which are impossible with men are possible with God" (Luke 18:27).

Disease, pain, and death entered the world when Adam and Eve sinned. However, with

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the curse that followed sin, God gave a promise of deliverance to mankind. Isaiah said, "With his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5), looking hundreds of years ahead to the day when this promise was fulfilled in Jesus' death on the Cross. With His Blood Jesus paid the price, not only for our salvation and spiritual healing, but also for our physical healing. We read in Matthew 8:16-17, "When the even was come, they brought unto him [Jesus] many that were possessed with devils:

and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."

Jesus purchased our healing at an infinite cost. When we think of the terrible agony He suffered, we recognize how unworthy we are to receive healing from Him. However, the multitudes Jesus touched when He walked on this earth were not healed because they deserved it. They were healed because Jesus looked on them with love and compassion, and that is how He regards His children today. We read in 2 Chronicles 16:9, "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him." The poorest and weakest among us may trust in the love of God and look to Him for healing.

God's Word gives clear instructions regarding what to do when we are afflicted. In the Book of James we read, "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. . . ." We have the blessed privilege of taking our physical needs to God in prayer, knowing that He hears and answers any heartcry that reaches out to Him in faith. James continues, "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of