

"Now see that I, even I, am He, and there is no God besides Me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; nor is there any who can deliver from My hand." Deuteronomy 32:39

Regularly we hear proclaimed on TBN and God T.V., and from many pulpits:

"Sickness is of the devil!";

"It is always the will of God for you to be healed!";

"Don't pray 'If it be Thy will!' Claim your healing! It is your right!";

"Demand your healing! You are a child of the King! Health is your birthright!";

"God can never be glorified by a sick body!";

"If you are not healed, then it's your own fault. It is either sin, or lack of faith, or a need for more seed money!"

But What Does the Bible Say?

"So the Lord said to him, 'Who has made man's mouth? Or who make the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I the Lord?'" Exodus 4:11

"Now see that I, even I, am He, and there is no God besides Me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; nor is there any who can deliver from My hand." Deuteronomy 32:39

*"Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. His disciples asked him, saying, 'Rabbi who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, '**N** either this man, nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.'*

"

John 9:1-3

Biblical Examples of Illness Amongst God's Servants

Job lost his health and his wealth, yet God described him as a righteous man.

"Elisha had become sick with the illness of which he would die..." 2 Kings 13:14

"You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the Gospel to you at the first. My trial which was in my flesh, you did not despise, or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. What then was the blessing you enjoyed? For I bear you witness that if possible you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me." Galatians 4:13-15

"Yet I considered it necessary to send you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need; since he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. For indeed he was sick, almost unto death; but God had mercy on him..." Philippians 2:25-27

"No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities." 1 Timothy 5:23

"But Trophimus, I have left in Miletus sick." 2 Timothy 4:20

*"And He said to me, '**My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.**'* *Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities that*

the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong."
2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Why Do We Experience Sickness?

Sometimes God makes us sick. Sometimes we bring sickness on ourselves. Sometimes we get sick only because we live in a fallen world. Ageing, sickness, and death are part of the consequences for the Fall of man into sin. When Adam and Eve rebelled against God the human race fell. Death entered into the world through sin.

Moses

God declared to Moses that He is the one who makes some people deaf, or dumb, or blind. God has declared: *"I kill, and I give life. I wound and I heal, and no one can deliver from My hand."*

Job

The whole book of Job makes it clear that even someone that God describes as a righteous man can suffer the loss of health, wealth and family.

Elisha

The great prophet Elisha, through whom God performed many miracles, fell sick and died.

The Man Born Blind

When the disciples asked Jesus whether the man was born blind because of his own sin, or that of his parents, the Lord Jesus declared *"Neither, but that the works of God can be made manifest."*

The Apostle Paul

The Apostle Paul himself, the great Apostle of Faith, through whom God worked so many great miracles, suffered physical infirmities, possibly an eye disease, the way it is described in Galatians 4:13-15. His illness was described as a trial to the Galatians and they were commended for not treating him with contempt or scorn. In fact they would have torn out their

own eyes and given them to Paul. Evidently Paul had some eye infection, or may have been partially blind.

The Co-Workers of Paul

Paul's co-worker, Timothy had frequent ailments, Paul's co-worker Epaphroditus was sick to the point of death and Paul left his co-worker Trophimus sick at Miletus. Sickness is part of life and we will only be disappointed if we expect perfect health at all times.

Is Healing in the Atonement?

Many will point out that healing is included in the Atonement of Christ.

"Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But 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. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, everyone, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah 53:4-6

The healing spoken of in Isaiah 53 is clearly, primarily the spiritual healing from our sins. Yet, ultimate healing is in the Atonement. In Heaven we will enjoy perfect resurrected bodies, free from all weakness, ageing, illness, decay and death.

Presumption is Not Faith

It would be a serious mistake and presumptuous to read into Isaiah 53, that we can claim all the benefits of the Atonement in our own earthly bodies, right here and now. Sickness entered the world with sin. Sickness, ageing and death is part of the consequences of the Fall of man, the curse of sin. Not all of the benefits of the Atonement are promised to be fully realised this side of Heaven.

The Reality of Healing Today

Of course, God can and does heal. Yet that is exceptional. It is grace. Undeserved favour. It is

not our right. We may not demand it.

Ageing and Death

Even if we are privilege to experience healing here on earth, the fact is that we will still age and die. That is part of the consequences of the sin of Adam and Eve, the Fall of all mankind and the curse of sin. It is part of the complex of God's judgement upon mankind for our rebellion against His Laws. What we sow, we shall reap (Galatians 6:7). The wages of sin is death, but the free Gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus (Romans 6:23).

Scripture Above Experience

For many people experience is king. But as Christians, Scripture must be our ultimate authority. Emotions are a poor substitute for Scripture. God is able to heal me, is Faith. God will heal me! is presumption. Healing is the exception, not the rule. Most believers serve God in their afflictions.

Healings in the Bible

In the Gospels we read that Jesus, during His earthly ministry, healed immediately, completely and permanently. Jesus often told those He healed not to tell anyone. When word spread about Jesus healings, crowds pressed around and made teaching and preaching difficult. Jesus often had to escape to get away from the crowds, including boarding a boat to go on the other side of the lake.

Modern Faith Healings

Now notice that today modern Word of Faith adherents, faith healers tend to heal very selectively, progressively, partially and temporarily. They even have teaching tapes and booklets on how to keep your healing, how to regain your healing and how not to lose your healing. Unlike our Lord who tended to try to keep the healings quiet so as to not interfere with His primary spiritual ministry of Discipleship and teaching, modern faith healers tend to perform on big stages with lights and cameras and put a microphone under the mouth of those who have come for healing, urging them to tell the world.

Positive Confession

We need to note that the Word of Faith emphasis on positive confession, speaking it into existence, actually encourages false testimony. Adherents are taught that they need to speak

things into existence by positive confession. Therefore when a Word of Faith adherent stands on the stage and declares: "*I am healed!*" It does not necessarily mean that he actually is healed. It is that he has been taught that he needs to say it, in order for it to happen.

False Testimonies

This means that believers are being taught to lie. They may not be healed. They may not have experienced any healing. However, they are taught to say: "*I am healed!*" This makes for consistent testimonies, but they are then false testimonies. Hence the need to invent unbiblical doctrines and teachings such as, How to Keep your Healing and How Not to Lose your Healing!

Dangerous Doctrines

The modern Word of Faith movement is actually idolatrous. They teach their adherents to tap into cosmic forces and laws of attraction. The formulas that are offered more resemble magic than faith. Much of what is being taught is not the Biblical faith in a sovereign God, but faith in faith.

Magical Formulas

Basically what the Word of Faith movement teaches as faith more resembles manipulation of spiritual forces to produce the desired response. The manipulation of reality to produce the results desired is magic. Biblical Faith is submission to God and obedience to His Law and Will. Tapping into cosmic forces and seeking to manipulate reality by formulas is magic, not Faith.

Do Not Be Deceived

Benny Hinn declares: "*If the Gospel lacks signs and wonders then its an empty shell.*" However, there are many warnings in the Bible against being deceived. Satan and his followers have counterfeit signs and wonders.

Signs and Wonders Do Not Save

Signs and wonders do not actually save anyone. In John's Gospel we read: "*Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the Feast, many believed in His Name when they saw the signs which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because he knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.*"

John 2:23-25. Our Lord Jesus said that an evil and idolatrous generation seeks for a sign (Luke 11:29).

Only the Gospel Saves

Only the Gospel can change lives. The Law of the Lord is perfect, it converts the soul (Psalm 19:7). The Law of the Lord is the schoolmaster that leads us to Christ that we may be justified by Faith (Galatians 3:24). Conversion for health and wealth is a false conversion.

Emergent Churches

The modern emergent churches are the next step in seeker-friendly churches. Rather than teaching Biblical Doctrine, they rather choose conversations and discussions. Emergents tend to reject absolute knowable truth. They try to look and sound as much like the world as possible, so as to make people feel as comfortable as possible. The emphasis is on what is fun and fashionable. Flashy entertainment and an emphasis on the here-and-now replace teachings on Eternity, Eternal Judgement, Heaven and hell. The Great Commission is virtually ignored as social issues, health and wealth, income equality, making society a better place, a utopia, becomes the primary focus.

Disturbing Arrogance

Many of the Word of Faith teachers display a lack of fear of God and shockingly un-Biblical concepts. Both Jesse Duplantis and Kenneth Copeland have claimed that God appeared to them and said: *"I need you!"* God, by definition, needs no one. He is all-knowing, everywhere present and all-powerful. He is eternal, immutable, and transcendent.

Jesse Duplantis claimed that God had told him: *"If you used any more faith you would blow Me off My Throne!"*

Jan Crouch claimed that when she thanked Jesus, He replied: *"No, Jan, thank you for your faith!"*

The arrogance of these Word of Faith teachers and their ignorance of basic Biblical Doctrine is astounding. Our Lord Jesus Christ owes us nothing, we owe Him everything.

Confusing the Creature with the Creator

Creflo Dollar teaches: *"You are gods. You are not just human. The real me is just like God!"*
One of the most foundational truths is that there is only one God! (Exodus 20:3; 2 Samuel 22:32; Isaiah 44:8; Psalm 50:1; Romans 16:27; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:5; James 2:19).

Creflo Dollar's

"little god"

doctrine teaches that Adam was

"an exact duplicate"

of God. Myles Munro teaches that:

"When Adam sinned, he transferred his godhead to satan."

God then

"lost his legal right"

to the earth and was

"banished"

from it. Satan is now the god of this world. But when a person is saved he regains his godhood and hence he regains his health and wealth.

"Prayer is man giving God permission to act on earth."; "Without man's permission, God can do nothing on earth!"; "God is always looking for someone to give Him permission!"; "God can only do what we give Him permission to do!"

A Different Gospel

This is a different gospel and it is proclaiming a different Jesus. This is an attempt to create our own reality by the words that we speak and through the thoughts that we think. The prosperity gospel is actually *The Secret* wrapped up in Christian terms.

The Spiritual Death of Jesus

Another false teaching of the Word of Faith movement is The Spiritual Death of Jesus. *"The Cross was not enough!"; "Jesus lost His Godhead and needed to be born again!"*

Do Not Exceed God's Word

The Scripture warns us ***"Learn not to exceed what is written."*** 1 Corinthians 4:6-14. There is a certain mystery about the Atonement of Christ. However the Scripture is quite clear that *"we are justified by His Blood."*

Romans 5:9.

On the Cross Jesus declared:

"It is finished!"

The Atonement

1 Peter 3:18, makes clear that Christ died once for all. Our Salvation was attained by the vicarious sacrifice, the Atonement of Christ's Blood on the Cross of Calvary. Jesus did not need to be born again in hell! These imaginative, un-Biblical doctrines are proclaiming another Jesus and a different gospel.

Control of the Weather

Some Word of Faith teachers, such as Gloria Copeland, have claimed that they can control the weather! Only God can control the weather. Only God can speak something into existence. We cannot create *ex nihilo*. God alone is all-knowing, all-powerful and everywhere present.

Prosperity is More Popular than Persecution

The allure of health and wealth makes the Word of Faith movement popular and prosperous. The Biblical promises of persecution, suffering and tribulation are not nearly so popular.

New Age Deception

Oprah Winfrey has aggressively promoted *The Secret*, with its laws of attraction, with positive confession and speaking reality into existence. The Word of Faith movement is, in many ways, a christian version of this New Age religion propagated by

The Secret
and books like it.

Designer Spirituality

The prosperity gospel is not the true Gospel. *Your Best Life Now*, *The Purpose Driven Life*, *Losing Weight the Jesus Way*, Designer Spirituality for a Consumer Market, are cases of heaping up teachers who will tickle their ears with what they are itching to hear. It is all part of a function of supply and demand. People want health and wealth, and the prosperity, Word of Faith preachers are giving the people what they want: They are telling the people what they want to hear (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

Inoculating People Against the Gospel

The Word of Faith Prosperity movement is the most prominent face of Christianity in the world. Could it be that one of the primary reasons why so many people are negative about Christianity and closed to our Evangelistic efforts on the streets, and in the shopping malls of our countries, is because they are disgusted and repelled by the superficial, sensational, materialistic,

hypocritical and extortionist Word of Faith movement so prominently broadcast through God TV and Trinity Broadcasting Network?

Shallow Self-Centeredness

So much of the messages of the faith healers are shallow and worthless. Joel Osteen, the author of *Your Best Life Now*, testified, as an example of answered prayer, a good parking spot at the shopping mall! In a world where Christians are being bombed, imprisoned, and tortured for their Faith, the superficiality and self-centredness of the Name-it and Claim-it crowd is nauseating.

The Widows Mite

Many of the faith preachers quote from the widows mite during their mandatory pre-sermon before the offerings. But they take this Scripture completely out of context. Jesus was not recommending that widows give all they have to live on, he was exposing a corrupt religious system.

They Devour Widows Houses

Note the context of the widows mite: *"Beware of the scribes who desire to walk in long robes, love greetings in the market places, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, **who devour widows houses** and for a pretence make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation. Then He looked up and saw the rich putting the gifts into the treasury, and He saw also a certain poor widow, putting in two mites. So He said, 'Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty, has put in all the livelihood that she had.'* Then as some spoke of the Temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said, 'As for these things which you see the days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down...

take heed that you not be deceived

. For many, will come in My Name, saying, I am he, and the time has drawn near, therefore do not go after them."

Luke 20:45-21:8

The Balance Between Providing for our Own Family and Generosity

The Lord Jesus does not want us to put in to any offering all that we have to live on! We are commanded to provide for our own families, and to help others carry their burdens. Tithes and

offerings are encouraged, but not destitution. This poor widow put in all that she had to live on. Our Lord condemned the corrupt religious system which, "*devour widow's houses...*"

Healing and Salvation

If you have enough faith to be saved then you certainly have enough faith to be healed. Healing is in many ways far less of a miracle than forgiveness, Eternal Salvation and Adoption into the family of God. To believe that God can heal you is faith. To demand that God will heal you is arrogant presumption. Yet, Benny Hinn has declared: "*Healing should never be separate from Salvation.*"

So if a person is not healed, should they question and doubt their Salvation?

Evidence of Saving Faith

Certainly we should test ourselves, but the key point is not whether there has been physical healing, but has there been a genuine change in your life? Have you evidenced Godly sorrow for your sins? Do you love God? Do you love to study God's Word? Do you love to pray? Do you hate sin?

Basic Principles for Good Health

Considering the basic requirements for good health, it would be foolishness to teach the average audience that each one of them should expect, and demand, healing immediately. Surely many need counselling and discipleship to change their lifestyles?

For good health we need:

1. Fresh air;
2. Clean water;
3. Healthy food, especially fruits and vegetables;
4. Regular exercise;
5. A positive attitude and a healthy lifestyle

Recognising Reality

Now the fact is that many people are making themselves sick by contaminating their lungs with

nicotine and chain smoking. Many people drink no end of carbonated drinks, sodas, coca colas, coffee and deprive their bodies of fresh, pure water. Many people eat no end of junk food, and fail to maintain any kind of healthy diet. Many people are grossly overweight and unfit, never exercising their bodies.

Polluting Body, Mind and Spirit

Many have extremely negative attitudes and feed their minds and souls with a steady diet of horror films, rap, rock, hip hop and other noise masquerading as music. And they wonder why they are sick? The problem in such cases is not lack of faith, but lack of fresh air, clean water, healthy food, regular exercise, positive attitude and/or healthy lifestyle.

A Call for Common Sense

Suppose you have a grossly overweight man who is a chain smoker, drunkard, or drug addict, who eats no end of McDonalds supersized burgers and fries, and only drinks coca cola, never exercising and watches five hours of TV every day, filling the rest of the time with noise through his i-pod earphones. Could God's Word for him be: *just believe, claim you healing, speak it into existence!*

Surely such a person needs to repent of his sins, be converted, change his lifestyle, and be disciplined in what is needed for healthy life?

Magic and Presumption

It is not Biblical faith, but New Age magic that would suggest that, after a lifetime of breaking all of God's Laws that we could expect Him, by an *Abracadabra*, snap of the fingers, wave of the magic wand, to undo all the inevitable consequences of a lifetime of disobedience to the Word of God and violation of all the laws of nature.

The Hurt of Healing

Even if, for some reason, such a person was healed from the high cholesterol, low blood pressure, hardening of the arteries, and other symptoms of his unhealthy lifestyle, in a short time he would be right back in the same place as before.

Tickling Ears

Telling people what they want to hear, instead of what they should hear, is not actually helping them at all. Most importantly it is not being faithful to the Word of God. The Word of Faith, *Name*

-it and Claim-it, Gab-it and Grab-it

, Health, Wealth and Prosperity preachers, may be popular, but they are false teachers. They are effectively inoculating people against true Christianity.

The Consequences of a Lifetime of Smoking

I saw my beloved Father suffer the consequences of a lifetime of smoking a pack of *Chesterfields* cigarettes a day. His last years were a series of heart attacks, strokes and emphysema. However, it was the physical consequences for his unhealthy lifestyle that led my Father to wholeheartedly repent and surrender his life to God. Two and a half years before he died on Christmas Eve, 1986, my Father surrendered his life to Christ. In tears he declared his frustration that he had wasted so much of his life. When he was a hotel manager, there was a Bible in every room. Yet only now, when he was suffering from diabetes and too blind to be able to read, did he desperately want to study the Bible. We organised for him the complete Bible on audio tape and he went through it several times, regularly weeping with regret that he had squandered his health and now was unable to do so much of what he now realised was most important.

Physical Ailments Can Lead People to Christ

Similarly, my Mother suffered strokes, heart attacks and emphysema from a lifetime of smoking. She also lost her leg which had to be amputated, due to gangrene from terrible circulation caused by the clogging up of her arteries from smoking. Yet, it was through these physical consequences of her unhealthy lifestyle that my Mother came to surrender her life to Christ. For the last two and a half years of her life, she served God with the energy and limited health that she had left.

Missionary Ailments

As a Missionary, I have suffered many of the consequences of working in inhospitable climates: sunburn, heatstroke, dehydration, malaria, fevers, viruses and tick bite fever. I have also suffered kidney stones on multiple times, having to be hospitalised on three occasions. I have experienced cracked ribs from aerial bombardment by the Sudan Air Force, back injuries from the extraordinary weights we have to carry in such literature and Bible distribution ministries, toothaches, abscesses, stomach ailments and a scorpion bite which paralysed my left arm.

A Scorpion's Deadly Poison

On that occasion, I was on a Mission to Sudan, heading to the Nuba Mountains, when a highly

poisonous pale yellow scorpion stung me on my left hand. I immediately felt the poison surging up my arm and heading towards my heart. We were very far from any medical help. All I could do was call for the believers to gather around me and pray. I experienced God's healing as hands were laid on me and prayers of faith were offered, I felt the poison literally drain out of my shoulder and arm and, within the hour, I had the use of my arm back. Indeed, the promise of healing in Mark 16, is given in the context of the Great Commission. We do not have the right to demand it, but we have the privilege to seek healing from the Lord, if it be His Will.

It Is a Privilege to Suffer in God's Service

It would not be reasonable, however, for me to think that I could serve as a missionary and be exempt from the consequences of working in harsh environments and inhospitable climates. With my fair skin, sunburn is inevitable if I do not smear on sufficient sun cream, roll down my sleeves and wear a hat. If I do not drink enough water I will suffer dehydration and heat exhaustion. If I fail to get the leeches and ticks off my skin after hiking through the bush, then tick bite fever will result. If I fail to maintain sufficient hydration, my kidney stones will erupt again. If I drink unpurified water, I will have violent stomach aches. These are just some of the realities all missionaries to these regions need to learn how to handle and to prepare for.

From Terminal to Transplant

My son, Christopher, was born with kidney failure in August 1995. Within days of being born he needed emergency operations. The doctors gave him no chance of survival at birth. Yet, by God's grace, he has confounded the worst predictions of the medical specialists, time and again. By 2009 his one remaining kidney was below 5% of its function and he either needed dialysis, or a kidney transplant. I went through all the battery of tests and was rejected as a donor, because my cholesterol level was above the required limit for a donor. My wife, Lenora, was accepted as a donor and Christopher was given a new lease on life when his mother's kidney was transplanted into him, December 2009. This was followed by months of complications and 11 anaesthetics and operations in 9 weeks. Yet, within a year of his transplant he had achieved his Black Belt in Karate. Within two years of the transplant he won Gold medals Nationally and achieved his National Colours. Christopher then represented South Africa overseas in the World Karate Tournament 2012.

Hepatitis and Cancer

My wife, Lenora, contracted hepatitis in 2005. This led to 11 days on a drip, 5 weeks in hospital and 5 months bed-ridden. Within 6 months of being the kidney transplant donor, Lenora was diagnosed with an aggressive form of cancer and this required surgery and chemotherapy.

Personal Experience

So, within my own family and personal experience, I can see examples of how we can sometimes bring sickness on ourselves, such as with my parents who suffered heart attacks, strokes and emphysema from life-times of smoking. Yet, we saw the Grace of God which brought them to Salvation through their afflictions. In the case of Christopher and Lenora, we see the consequences of living in a fallen world. As the Lord said concerning the man born blind from birth: **"Neither this man, nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him."** John 9:3. The injuries I have suffered from motorbike accidents, aerial and artillery bombardments in war zones, are other examples of living in a fallen world.

Everything Has Consequences

Yet the fact is that all of us should enjoy far greater health if we would apply the requirements for good health: fresh air, clean water, healthy food, regular exercise and a positive attitude. A healthy lifestyle will go a long way towards greatly improving our quality of life and health.

The Great Commission

When we are involved in the fulfilment of the Great Commission, particularly in the frontiers of the faith, we can expect some signs and wonders and miraculous healings, but that does not exempt us from suffering some of the natural consequences of living in a fallen world.

Search the Scriptures

We need to be like the Bereans who were more noble than the others, in that they searched the Scriptures daily, to see if the things that the Apostles said were true (Acts 17:11). A mature Christian is a discerning Christian. We cannot love God without knowing Him and we cannot know Him without studying His Word, the Bible. We are commanded to contend for the Faith. Jesus is our model, and He exposed false prophets, scribes and pharisees, for their hypocrisy and false teaching. The goodness of man is an un-Biblical concept.

"The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." Jeremiah 17:9-10

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Justin Peters' 4-part seminar, [***A Call For Discernment***](#) DVD boxset, documents the abuses and false doctrines of the Health and Wealth Prosperity movement. The DVD boxset is also available from CLB.