



Does God Heal Physically in Response to Prayer?

by JENNIFER KENNEDY DEAN

LET ME LAY OUT CLEARLY for you how I understand prayer for physical healing. As I travel and meet people and listen to their concerns, and as I look at my own faith journey, I have come to believe that one of the most confusing and disturbing aspects of prayer is prayer for physical healing. Most of us have had at least one experience of praying for the healing of a terminally ill person, believing God would heal, claiming scriptural promises, sensing a God-given peace that surpasses understanding... only to see the person for whom we prayed succumb to the illness and die. This experience has left in its wake many broken and disillusioned pray-ers. We feel that our prayers made no difference, that the person died in spite of our best prayer efforts.

Let's look at this prayer experience honestly and without pretense. Don't feel ashamed that such an experience has caused you to doubt and has left you confused. Before you read further, stop and ask God to help you find the truth.

Does God heal in response to prayer? Yes! Does God *always* heal in response to prayer? Yes! However, God will be the One to decide what form healing will take and by what method He will bring healing in response to prayer.

We cannot treat God's holy, precious, now-speaking Word as if it were a catalog from which we can place an order at the divine warehouse. God does not deliver pre-packaged, look-alike miracles upon demand. He has a perfect, good, pleasing, and tailor-made design for each situation on earth. God's way





is to prepare the answer before the need appears. Before you knew about the illness, God knew about it. Far from being taken by surprise or being at a loss for what to do, God has already planned and purposed an outcome that will “prosper you and not harm you,” an outcome that will give you “a future and a hope” (Jer. 29:11). Prayer releases onto the earth the perfect design of God for that specific situation.

God heals in many ways. When you pray for a person who is sick—either something as simple as a headache or as life-threatening as cancer—God heals. Your prayers access His power and He always intervenes directly because of your prayers. Never feel that the situation took the same course it would have taken without your prayers.

What are some ways that God heals in response to prayer?

God can heal directly, suddenly, outside His created order.

Two extremes in belief exist about this method of divine healing, neither of which is biblically sound. One extreme says that God never heals outside His created order because the age of miracles is past. I see no biblical proof of this. My own experience, and that of many of you, challenges this belief. God encourages us never to limit Him, but to know that nothing is impossible for Him. If we choose to believe that God’s intervening power is no longer available on earth, then much of the Bible becomes irrelevant. Why would the Spirit of God breathe and then carefully preserve irrelevant teaching? In order to force the Bible into this framework, you will have to impose your experience upon the Scripture. I prefer to allow the Scripture to speak for itself and let its truths define my experience.

The other extreme is that God always heals outside His created order, if enough faith is exhibited. This belief has many theological inconsistencies. The primary difficulty is that this type of thinking puts emphasis on the





person praying or the person in need of healing, rather than on God. Faith becomes work worthy of reward. Healing becomes God's reward for "strong faith." Faith formula thinking says that if you pray and the person for whom you pray is not physically healed, you are to blame for your lack of faith. If this is true, then God demands a "faith" that is so difficult to attain that few can attain it. He must be very stingy with His mercies. This portrait of God would defy His Word about Himself. His Word tells us that He is rich and overflowing in mercy and that He lavishes grace upon us.

God can and does heal directly and outside His created order. Sometimes He does so at the moment of prayer. Other times He does so after much concentrated prayer. Other times He does so weeks, months, even years after prayer for healing has begun.

God, in response to prayer, can bring healing by using the natural healing processes of the body.

When God heals in this way, is this any less a miracle? Isn't everything that we call "natural" really "supernatural" because God originated it? The natural healing processes of the body as God created them are amazing, too wonderful to fully comprehend.

God created the world and everything in it with deliberate purpose. Every detail is planned by Him for His loving intentions. Colossians 1:16-17, speaking of God the Son, says: "For by him all things were created... all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."

Everything was created *by* Him. Therefore, nothing in creation is a mystery to Him. No disease, no germ, no bacteria, no infection stumps God. He knows exactly how to rev up the body's healing processes and heal if that is the form healing should take. The power of God will enhance the immune system.





Not only was everything created *by* Him, everything was created *for* Him. Creation exists for God to use. If He chooses to heal within the bounds of His own creation, using His creation for His purposes, you can know that God has directly answered your prayer for healing.

“Nature,” or God’s created order, does not stand alone. In Him, all things hold together. Jesus is creation’s lynchpin. When creation works, it is directly the result of the supernatural power of God. God’s creation is not independent of God.

God may heal by means of scientific advances and medical technology. Is this not a miracle, directly from God? Human beings have no knowledge except that which God has given. God has hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in His Son. (Col. 2:3) Whether to keep a matter hidden, or allow a matter to be discovered, is God’s choice. “It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings” (Prov. 25:2).

Man did not create science. Rather, man discovers the principles of God’s creation. Knowledge is never new, only newly discovered. “Is there anything of which one can say, ‘Look! This is something new’? It was here already, long ago; it was here before our time” (Ecc.1:10).

When God uses medical technology or medical advances to heal, thank Him for His miracle. God knows how to empower doctors and nurses, how to enhance the potential of medicine. He is in control.

God, in response to prayer, may leave a chronic physical ailment in place in order to heal at a deeper level.

Nothing comes into your life, even if initiated by Satan, without God’s direct permission. God only allows difficulties into our lives because He can use them for higher good. *He can do more through them than He could do without them.*





Even though Paul's "thorn in the flesh" came to him as a messenger from Satan to defeat and discourage Him, God allowed it and chose to leave it in Paul's life for His bigger purpose.

When God chooses to heal in this way, He will perform miracles that we will miss if we have a one-dimensional, short-sighted agenda. This is healing and it is brought to earth through your prayers.

Remember, though, God's ways are "past tracing out." We can never get God boiled down to a neat formula. When it seems that God is healing in this way, don't stop praying. He may heal in this way for a time, only to heal physically on His perfect schedule.

God may choose, in response to your prayers, to allow the disease to take its natural course and end in death.

Death is not defeat. Because of Jesus, death has no sting and the grave has no victory. Death only removes our loved ones from our sight. Death is the doorway into eternity, for which we were created. We were not created for earth and time. We were created for eternity. Our lives are not "cut short" by death. Nothing can cut our lives short because we have everlasting life. We are immune from defeat by the last enemy, death.

In Hebrews 9:27 we read: "...man is destined to die once." Eternity brings us fully into our joyous destiny, *and our complete and eternal healing*. Illness of any kind will never again touch the person healed in eternity.

When your prayers for healing are answered with an eternal "yes," you have this certainty: The power of God brought healing in this way, therefore not one more earth-day would have been better; not one more earth-day would have brought more fulfillment or more happiness.



As God heals, He is working according to an eternal strategy. He is not limited to earth-bound, time-bound goals. Security is not in what is seen, but what is unseen. What is seen will pass away, but what is unseen is eternal. If our minds are set on things of the earth, if earth and time define our thinking, then God's "yes" will sometimes look like "no." How much we will miss! How many miracles will go uncelebrated because they are unrecognized! God always heals in response to prayer. Don't be afraid to pray boldly and unabashedly for healing. God will heal!

I can certainly not describe all of God's ways of healing, because I do not know them all. Pray and watch for Him to work. Rejoice in His ways, Who is great in counsel and mighty in deed.



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