

A Scriptural Look at Healing

The first thing that I am asking you to do is to have an open heart in order to look at the scriptures with fresh eyes. What I mean is that we all have some type of understanding about healing, whether it is right or wrong. The only way we can truly know if our understanding is correct is if we allow the Word of God to be the only standard of truth that we go by, not our former teaching or our experiences.

Just to give you an idea of how the truth in the scriptures can be very different from *what we think* the scriptures say, let's look at three examples in some other areas:

1. Jacob deceived his father in Gen.27 with his mother's help and stole the blessing from Esau. Esau was going to kill him so his mother and father sent him away to his mother's family. Most of the time when people read this, they see Jacob as a young man. The reality is that he was 77 yrs. old at the time. This also means that after he worked for 20 yrs. for his father-in-law Laban, and was returning back to his own family, he was 97 yrs. old. You must also remember that it was on his way home that he wrestled all night with the angel, what a thing to do at his age! Again, most people have an idea that he was a young man. When we dig into scriptural truths, we sometimes find a very different picture than the one we had in our minds.

2. When we look at the scriptures regarding the children of Israel and how long they would be in bondage in a foreign land, the answer is usually 430 yrs. The clear steps to show my answer would take too long here to present all of the Biblical evidence, so I will give you the clear answer that can be verified from the Word of God. The 430 yrs. begins with the call of God on Abrahams life in the Ur of Chaldees. The scriptures also mention 400 yrs. and this begins with the birth of Isaac. There are 30 yrs. from the time of the call to the birth of Isaac. This leaves 400 yrs to be accounted for. As you follow the chronology of the family and when they went to Egypt, right on up to how old Joseph was when he died, you will find that there was a time period of 59 yrs. between the death of Joseph and the birth of Moses. Moses was 80 yrs. old when the Lord used him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. The scriptures say that God delivered them on the exact day that the 430 yrs. ended! That means that the Israelites were only slaves for a maximum of 139 yrs. and probably not even that long since the memory of Joseph and what he had done to save Egypt would have been in the minds of all for at least a short time after his death. Once again, we have a picture of something in the scriptures that is not totally accurate if we think that they were slaves for 430 yrs. The scriptures must be examined closely so that we can walk in the truth.

3. One more example of the reality of the scriptures compared to the idea we have of a circumstance is regarding Hagar and her son. In Gen. 21 we see that Hagar and her son are sent out of the camp of Abraham and are out in the wilderness. Hagar places her child under a bush and then goes about an arrow shot away from the child because she did not want to see the child die. Most people think of her son Ishmael as being a babe or a toddler. The scriptural truth is that he was approximately 16 yrs. old at the time.

- These examples all happen to deal with chronological misconceptions. There are many misconceptions about other doctrinal areas as well. The purpose of these examples is to show that we must keep an open heart as we search the Word of God or else we will miss seeing what it really says.

Healing in the Old Testament

We must look at what the scriptures reveal about the heart of God concerning healing, beginning in the Old Testament. Our God is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb 13:8), therefore we should see a continuity in the scriptures regarding his thoughts about healing.

1. God desires to heal.

Ps 103:2-5 New Living Translations

2 Let all that I am praise the Lord; may I never forget the good things he does for me.

3 He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases.

4 He redeems me from death and crowns me with love and tender mercies.

5 He fills my life with good things. My youth is renewed like the eagle's!

- God is a healer.

Deut 32:39 New Living Translation

39 Look now; I myself am he! There is no other god but me! I am the one who kills and gives life; I am the one who wounds and heals; no one can be rescued from my powerful hand!

- He is ultimately the one in charge!

Ex 15:26 NIV

26 He said, "If you listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, who heals you."

- I am the Lord that heals you (this word heals is also used in Jer 19:11 when speaking about the potter's vessel that cannot be **made whole** again. God says that he is the one who makes them whole).

Ex 23:24-26 NIV

24 Do not bow down before their gods or worship them or follow their practices. You must demolish them and break their sacred stones to pieces. 25 Worship the Lord your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you, 26 and none will miscarry or be barren in your land. I will give you a full life span.

Deut. 7:9-15 New Living Translation

9 Understand, therefore, that the Lord your God is indeed God. He is the faithful God who keeps his covenant for a thousand generations and lavishes his unfailing love on those who love him and obey his commands. 10 But he does not hesitate to punish and destroy those who reject him. 11 Therefore, you must obey all these commands, decrees, and regulations I am giving you today.

12 "If you listen to these regulations and faithfully obey them, the Lord your God will keep his covenant of unfailing love with you, as he promised with an oath to your ancestors. 13 He will love you and bless you, and he will give you many children. He will give fertility to your land and your animals. When you arrive in the land he swore to give your ancestors, you will have large harvests of grain, new wine, and olive oil, and great herds of cattle, sheep, and goats. 14 You will be blessed above all the nations of the earth. None of your men or women will be childless, and all your livestock will bear young. 15 And the Lord will protect you from all sickness. He will not let you suffer from the terrible diseases you knew in Egypt, but he will inflict them on all your enemies!

- These verses show the conditional aspect of his covenant. If they would keep his ways, he would keep away those sicknesses.

Ezek 34:15-16 NIV

15 I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign Lord. 16 I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.

- As you read this whole chapter, you will see that the heart of the Father is for his flock. This is part of what he desires to do for them. This could include different aspects including backsliding, physical, and emotional healing.

Ps 147:3 NIV

3 He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

- It also includes emotional healing.

Hos 14:1-4 New Living Translation

1 Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God, for your sins have brought you down.

2 Bring your confessions, and return to the Lord. Say to him, "Forgive all our sins and graciously receive us, so that we may offer you our praises.

3 Assyria cannot save us, nor can our war-horses. Never again will we say to the idols we have made, 'You are our gods.' No, in you alone do the orphans find mercy."

4 The Lord says, "Then I will heal you of your faithlessness; my love will know no bounds, for my anger will be gone forever.

- He heals the heart that has backslidden and desires to return to Him.

2 Chron 7:14-15 NIV

14 if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

- God could heal or restore the whole nation if they turned back to him!

Ps 107:17-20 NIV

17 Some became fools through their rebellious ways and suffered affliction because of their iniquities.

18 They loathed all food and drew near the gates of death.

19 Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress.

20 He sent forth his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave.

- Read this whole chapter in its entirety to see the heart and mercy of God.

Num 21:6-9 NIV

6 Then the Lord sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died. 7 The people came to Moses and said, "We sinned when we spoke against the Lord and against you. Pray that the Lord will take the snakes away from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

8 The Lord said to Moses, "Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live." 9 So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived.

- The Israelites brought judgment upon themselves by murmuring and complaining about no bread, no water, and they hated the manna. In spite of that, God had mercy on them.
- What if they chose not to believe that looking at a bronze snake would heal them? We will see as we go through this lesson that God wants us to believe his promises and receive them by faith.
- This example was also a type, shadow, or figure of Jesus (Jn 3:14-16).
- We have seen from the verses in this section that God is a healer. This includes emotional,

physical, from a backslidden state—even the nation of Israel as a whole when they turned back to him.

2. There were consequences for disobeying him and turning away from him.

Deut. 28:15, 58-61 NIV

15 However, if you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:

58 If you do not carefully follow all the words of this law, which are written in this book, and do not revere this glorious and awesome name — the Lord your God — 59 the Lord will send fearful plagues on you and your descendants, harsh and prolonged disasters, and severe and lingering illnesses. 60 He will bring upon you all the diseases of Egypt that you dreaded, and they will cling to you. 61 The Lord will also bring on you every kind of sickness and disaster not recorded in this Book of the Law, until you are destroyed.

- God is the healer, but to those who broke covenant with him there was the consequence of getting all kinds of sicknesses.

2 Chron 21:13-15

13 But hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab, and also hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house, which were better than thyself:

14 Behold, with a great plague will the Lord smite thy people, and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods:

15 And thou shalt have great sickness by disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness day by day.

- Jehoram turned away from serving the Lord and brought consequences of plague on the people and a sickness upon himself.

Deut. 29

a) v.1 This covenant was besides the covenant that was made in Horeb.

b) v.22 Your children and others will see the calamities and the diseases that the Lord has afflicted you with.

c) v.24 all the nations will ask why?

d) v.25 Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord that he made with them.

- The Lord himself sent these diseases and sicknesses upon his own people when they forsook his covenant and did not honor nor fear the Lord. They broke the covenant that he made with them, it was not God breaking his word.
- We see a similar thing happening in the New Testament in 1 Cor 11:20-32: The Corinthians were not partaking of the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner. They were being selfish and not concerned about the body of Christ (from my viewpoint it is regarding how they were treating other members of the body and it also reflects on how they perceived the accomplished work of Christ on the cross). It was because of this heart in them that many were weak, feeble, sick, and some of them died. It was a chastening from the Lord.

3. God is still very merciful, even when things are not perfect.

2 Chron. 5:13-14; 6:19-31

a) God's glory had filled the temple

- b) Solomon prayed for the people and that the eyes of the Lord would be open upon the temple
- c) v.28 Solomon also prayed that **whatever sickness** there was...
- d) v.28 If your people pray, each aware of his own grief...
- e) v.30 Hear and forgive, you alone know each one's heart

2 Chron. 7:12-16

- a) If my people...shall humble themselves, pray, seek my face, turn from their ways
- b) I will hear and heal their land
- Though God's people had turned away from him, he was willing to extend mercy and grace toward his people if they would repent and seek him, and heal them and their land.

2 Chron. 30:1-4, 13-20

- a) Many ate the passover without being cleansed
- b) Hezekiah prayed that the Lord would pardon them as they sought God, though they didn't fulfill all that was required
- c) The Lord **listened and healed the people**
- The Lord is merciful and desires to move on behalf of those who diligently seek him.
- They did not have all their 'ducks in a row', yet God moved on their behalf because they were setting their hearts toward the Lord.

God's heart for his people Israel was for them to walk in his covenant and he would not place upon them any of the sicknesses or diseases. In Psalm 105:37, it states that when the children of Israel came out of Egypt, there was not one feeble among them. To have that many people traveling and none were stumbling or feeble is a remarkable thing.

Can we deny the attributes of the Redemptive name of God?

Throughout scripture we see the Lord revealing his character or nature and his name reflecting that. The following scriptures show how God revealed various aspects of his nature and how the name reflects that.

- Jehovah-Shammah--The Lord is there (present). (Ezek 48:35)
- Jehovah-Shalom--The Lord our Peace. (Judges 6:24)
- Jehovah-Ra-ah--The Lord is my Shepherd. (Ps 23:1)
- Jehovah-Jireh--The Lord will provide. (Gen 22:14)
- Jehovah-Nissi--The Lord is our banner--victor or captain. (Ex 17:15)
- Jehovah-Tsidkenu--The Lord our Righteousness. (Jer 23:6)
- Jehovah-Raphah--I am the Lord thy Physician, or I am the Lord that healeth thee. (Ex 15:26)

We very easily accept the fact that the Lord is our Shepherd, that he is Our Provider, and that He is our Banner. Let us not pick and choose which characteristics of God are still applicable and deny the others, for he changes not.

Here we have seen scripturally that the redemptive name of God includes being the healer, as well as other scriptures showing that God healed in the Old Testament. Malachi 3:6 and Heb 13:8 show that God does not change. If he was a healer in the Old Testament, is he still one today?

Healing in the New Testament is foretold in the Old

The Old Testament had figures and shadows of truths that would be revealed or opened up for us in the New Covenant:

Col 2:16-18 NIV

16 Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. 17 These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.

Heb 10:1 NIV

10 The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming — not the realities themselves.

Heb 9:8-10 NIV

8 The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still standing. 9 This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. 10 They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings — external regulations applying until the time of the new order.

- The Law, the temple, and its practices were a shadow of what was to come.

Here in Isaiah 53 we have a prophetic word concerning the Messiah and his work. God revealing in the Old Testament the reality of what Christ would do when he arrived.

Read through the 53rd chapter of Isaiah and then go over these notes on some key words in that passage. Having the context in mind will help you to determine if these statements are true or not.

Isa. 53:3 Acquainted with grief

Acquainted: the following scriptures use the same Hebrew word.

Ex 3:7

7 And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I **know** their sorrows;

Ex 23:9

9 Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye **know** the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

- He knows what we are going through.

Grief: the following scriptures use the same Hebrew word.

Deut 7:15

15 And the Lord will take away from thee all **sickness**, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all them that hate thee.

Deut 28:61

61 Also every **sickness**, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, them will the Lord bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed.

2 Chron 21:15

15 And thou shalt have great **sickness** by disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out by reason of **the sickness** day by day.

- In almost every place this word is used it is speaking of sickness or disease.
- God knows, is acquainted, with sickness (which also includes being wounded as Jesus was)

Isa. 53:4 borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.

Borne: a verb meaning to lift, to carry, to take away. This word is also used in verse 12, he **bare** the sin of many.

Griefs: same word as above in verse 3.

Carried: used in verse 11 as **shall bear** their iniquities.

Sorrows: pain-both physical and mental. OT:4341 For the most part, however, it is impossible to separate the mental and physical anguish as far as this word is concerned. A case in point would be Ex 3:7 where God's compassion for his people's affliction is expressed. Surely they were suffering physical pain, but their total situation was cause for anguish, as well.

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- The Lord not only knows our griefs and sorrows, but he has carried them away. We will see that this verse is speaking of healing that takes place in the New Testament.

Isa. 53:5 wounded for our transgressions.

Wounded: to wound, to bore through, to pierce.

Transgressions: rebellion against God and his laws, willful deviation or revolt.

- We use this verse to show that Jesus bore our penalty.

v. 5 bruised for our iniquities.

Bruised: to crush, to be crushed, to be contrite, to be broken.

Iniquities: OT:5771 a masculine noun meaning iniquity, evil, guilt, punishment. This is one of the four main words indicating sin in the Old Testament. This word indicates sin that is particularly evil, since it strongly conveys the idea of twisting or perverting deliberately.

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- We know from the New Testament how horrible this bruising was that Jesus took for us.

v. 5 the chastisement of our peace was upon him.

Chastisement: the correction, chastisement, or punishment inflicted by parents on their children, designed to amend their faults; discipline or correction of God. The word does not of necessity denote punishment, though it is often used in that sense.

- That is, the chastisement by which our peace is effected or secured was laid upon him; or, he took it upon himself, and bore it, in order that we might have peace.
- Isaiah predicted that God's chastisement on man was carried by the Suffering Servant, bringing peace to those who believe in Him. This is clearly a context of substitutionary atonement. Here the Servant of the Lord is seen as taking "the severe punishment" vicariously, more clearly revealing God's merciful ways of dealing with his rebellious people through redemptive judgment and suffering.

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v.5 with his stripes we are healed.

Stripes: a bruise, a wound, or an injury.

Healed: verb meaning to heal, to make fresh. It describes the process of healing, being restored to health, made healthy, usable, fertile:

Scriptures that use this word healed:

Ps 103:3

3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who **healeth** all thy diseases;

Ps 147:3

3 He **healeth** the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.

- Physical and emotional healing are both included in this healing.

What were these stripes?

Mark 15:15

15 And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had **scourged** him, to be crucified.

Phragelloo NT:5417 is the word used in Matt 27:26, and Mark 15:15, of the "scourging" endured by Christ and administered by the order of Pilate. Under the Roman method of "scourging," the person was stripped and tied in a bending posture to a pillar, or stretched on a frame. The "scourge" was made of leather thongs, weighted with sharp pieces of bone or lead, which tore the flesh of both the back and the breast. Eusebius (Chr.) records his having witnessed the suffering of martyrs who died under this treatment.

(from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.)

Ps 22:17 TEV

17 All my bones can be seen. My enemies look at me and stare.

- Jesus' flesh was ripped wide open by the scourging he received.

Isa 53:10 (KJV) reads, "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he has put him to grief," i.e. "he has made him sick" in the sense of mental anguish, But it could be in a physical sense, i.e. "he has wounded him." This would parallel the corresponding passive (Hophal) which is used three times, always in the sense of "I am wounded (made sick)" from battle injuries (1 Kings 22:34; 2 Chron 18:33, Ahab; 2 Chron 35:23, Josiah).

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Here are a couple other Old Testament verses that show that Jesus suffered in the flesh so that we could have peace with God, our griefs and sorrows carried away.

Isa 50:6

6 I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

Isa 52:14

14 As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:

- Jesus was beaten, battered, bruised, humiliated, spit upon, and crucified for our total salvation.

Look at this last verse of Isaiah 53:

Isa 53:12 NIV

12 Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

- It is important to note that this passage is quoted and seen clearly as a depiction of Jesus taking away our sins. Yet, it is this same passage of Isaiah that says he will also carry our sicknesses (griefs-and all that the word encompasses) and sorrows. If we believe that he carried our sins, is it that hard to see that he also dealt with our sickness?

Some points to consider in the passage of Isaiah 53.

1. He is well acquainted and knows of our sicknesses and sorrows.

2. He took away our sicknesses and it is the same word to bare or take away as is used in verse 12 of this chapter regarding our sins.
3. He was pierced and broken for our transgressions and iniquities.
4. He took upon himself the chastisement that brings us peace.
5. With his stripes we are healed.
6. If we believe that he bore our sins and that means that he carried them away, why would we not believe the scriptures when they say that he bore our griefs/sicknesses?
7. One of the key points we must understand is that healing is just as much a part of the New Covenant as having our sins taken away by Christ. It is part of the atonement.

A New Testament verse clarifying that Isaiah 53 refers to healing.

Matt 8:16-17 NASU

16 When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill. 17 This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: "HE HIMSELF TOOK OUR INFIRMITIES AND CARRIED AWAY OUR DISEASES."

- These verses clearly shows that Isa. 53 is speaking about physical healing. Many commentators will say that it was our spiritual healing. While it does relate to inner healing, Jesus physically healed people based on the fact that he was going to bear their sicknesses away. Can we open our hearts to see that if we can rely on him to forgive us, then we can also rely on him to heal us?
- Dealing with our sins and dealing with our sicknesses are both part of the New Covenant.
- Healing is part of the New Covenant!

Healing in the New Testament

We have already seen that Matt 8:16-17 shows that Jesus was healing people physically because of what he would accomplish through his life, death, and resurrection. Jesus dealt with every thing that affects us and our relationship with the Father, thankfully this includes healing for our bodies.

1. What about the curse of the law, does it still affect us and hinder us from being healed?

Gal. 3:10-13 NIV

10 All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." 11 Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." 12 The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, "The man who does these things will live by them." 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."

- His death on the cross for us has removed every part of the curse from us, including the sicknesses.

Deut 27:26 NIV

26 "Cursed is the man who does not uphold the words of this law by carrying them out." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

Deut 28:15 NIV

15 However, if you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:

- These two points: 1) *healing is part of the atonement* and 2) *we are free from the curse of the law* give us solid ground to stand on regarding healing. These are part of the promises of God that are just as sure and solid as the ones regarding having our sins removed.

2. While we have difficulty believing for healing in our day, the Jews were just the opposite.

Luke 5:18-26

a) which is easier to say, your sins are forgiven or rise up and walk?

- The scribes and the Pharisees thought that Jesus was speaking blasphemies when he told the man his sins were forgiven. They had a less difficult time receiving healings as seen in the next verse.

Luke 13:14 NIV

14 Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue ruler said to the people, "There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath."

a) the ruler of the synagogue was more upset about the sabbath being broken than the fact that a healing took place. His suggestion to the people is that there are six days in which men should work, come in on one of those days and get healed! It did not seem to be a big deal to him.

- In our society, we have the opposite problem. We believe in the forgiveness of sins, but really struggle with receiving healings. Have we trivialized the miracle of forgiveness? Is it a small thing for God to be able to change a person's entire inner man? How easy is it to change a prostitute into a virtuous woman? A drug addict into a faithful minister? We speak assuredly to anyone who listens and we tell them that Jesus can save and change them. Where do we get the confidence to say such things? Why is it harder to tell people that the same God can heal them?
- We are convinced that Jesus removes our sins and makes us new creations. When it comes to healing, we have heard various things, we are not really sure, so we vacillate and we come to believe that God only heals once in a while.
- The problem with that approach is that we never really know what to say to individuals because we are not sure of the truth and cannot assuredly say that Jesus can heal them.
- As you continue through this material, you will see over and over again that the New Covenant includes healing.
- There are certain reasons why people are not healed and these will be covered in another section.

3. The New Covenant does include healing and as we look at what took place in the New Testament we will see this to be true.

Matt. 15:21-28

- Jesus said that he was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He calls healing the children's bread. He is saying that it belongs to them.
- Jesus healed this woman's daughter even though she was a woman of Canaan. She had faith that Jesus responded to.

Acts 10:38

38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

- Jesus was anointed of the Father to do these things.

Matt 9:35

35 And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the

gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

- Preaching the gospel and healing went hand in hand with Jesus.

Matt 10:1,6-8

10 And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

- Jesus gave his apostles authority to heal, cast out devils, and even raise the dead. This took place before his resurrection.

Luke 10:8-9

8 And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you:

9 And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

- Healing was an evidence that the kingdom of God was right there in their midst.

Acts 1:8

8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

- The apostles and disciples were to receive supernatural power to be effective witnesses. The disciples received the anointing from Jesus to continue the work that he had begun. It did not stop with just them, Acts 2:38-39 shows that this anointing is for all who believe.

Acts 4:33

33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

- They walked in that power!

Acts 6:8

8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

- Stephen was a deacon, not an apostle, and he walked in the power of God.

Mark 16:17-18

17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

18 .They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

- **All who believe** are told that they will lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.

Acts 4:29-31 New English Translation

29 And now, Lord, pay attention to their threats, and grant to your servants to speak your message with great courage, 30 while you extend your hand to heal, and to bring about miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus." 31 When they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God courageously.

- One of the things that helped them to speak courageously was the fact that God did confirm the word with healings, signs, and wonders.

Acts 5:14-16

14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)

15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.

16 There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

- God was confirming his word!

Acts 28:1-9

2 And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.

9 So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:

- Paul was used to heal these foreigners on the island of Malta.
- The next few verses show that Paul believed in the power of God going hand in hand with the message of salvation.

Rom 15:17-19

17 I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God.

18 For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed,

19 Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

Rom 15:17-19 New Living Translation

17 So I have reason to be enthusiastic about all Christ Jesus has done through me in my service to God. 18 Yet I dare not boast about anything except what Christ has done through me, bringing the Gentiles to God by my message and by the way I worked among them. 19 They were convinced by the power of miraculous signs and wonders and by the power of God's Spirit. In this way, I have fully presented the Good News of Christ from Jerusalem all the way to Illyricum.

- The gospel was ministered with the power of God confirming it.

1 Cor 2:4-5

4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

- Paul's preaching had the demonstration (manifestation, proving) of the Spirit and power. It was more than persuasive words.

1 Cor 4:19-20

19 But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power.

20 For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.

- He knew that God backs up his word with power.

1 Thess 1:5

5 For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

- The gospel should have the power of God backing it as well as a life style lived according to that word.

Heb 2:2-4 NIV

1 We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.

2 For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, 3 how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation,

which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. 4 God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

- God himself testified to the truth of the gospel message by signs, wonders, miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit. There is no scripture that says these are no longer for today. In fact, 1 Cor. 12 speaks about these gifts being used in the church as the Holy Spirit wills. One of these gifts is the gifts of healing.
- God is still confirming his word with signs, healings, wonders, and gifts of the Spirit.
- Just as surely as people can come to Jesus and have him take their sins and make them a new creation, they can also come to him for healing and have him remove their sickness.

What are some ways that God uses to heal?

1. The spiritual gifts.

1 Cor. 12:4-14, 28-31

- a) God distributes these nine gifts as he wills.
- b) Included in this list are faith, working of miracles, and gifts of healing.
- c) God distributes to every man as he wills.
- d) Not all have the gifts of healing.
- e) We are told to desire the best gifts (1 Cor. 14:1), the best gift is more than likely the one needed at the time.

Note: I chose this passage to begin with so that we could deal with point d) Not all have the gifts of healing- in order to bring some clarity to how this works with all of the other means of healing found in scripture.

- As you look at the context of 1 Cor. 12:27-30, you will see that Paul is asking if all are apostles, if all are prophets, if all are teachers, etc. He also asks if all have gifts of healing. The obvious answer to all of these questions is no, not all have these graces in their lives.
- Yet we see that apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers equip the saints with their ministries. They are leaving a deposit of what God has given them in the hearts of those who hear them.
- As a teacher, I get great joy when I see the saints of God encouraged to study the word of God in a deeper way because of my ministry to them. It gets even better when I see them teaching the things they have learned to other believers and taking on a part of my grace, even though they themselves are not teachers. The same would be true of the other ministries.
- Some have the gifts of healing. They would be used proficiently by the Lord to see healings. I believe that their gifting can cause the rest of us to desire to be used by the Lord in seeing others healed. We have the opportunity to do so because the Lord has also given some other avenues for us to touch his heart and see people healed. It might not be given to us quite as clearly as the gifts of healing, but we can still see the hand of God move.
- The other ways involve our faith. The faith of the one who is praying and/or the faith of the one receiving. Our faith might not always be what it needs to be, sort of like Peter when he walked on the water. When he saw the wind and waves he started sinking and Jesus said "Oh you of little faith, why did you doubt?" There are times when our faith is not strong as it could be for a variety of reasons. Some of those reasons will be seen in the section of why people do not get healed. When one has God using him in the gifts of healing, you know of a certainty that God

is going to heal a person because it is totally dependent on the Holy Spirit speaking to the heart. This still requires faith in the person being used by the Lord to step out and do what the Lord has spoken to their heart.

2. The Laying on of hands.

Heb. 6:1-2

a) this shows that it is an elementary teaching of Christ that we should know. There is a lesson on the Laying on of Hands in the School of Foundations for Ministry classes under the Basic Foundations lessons.

Acts 28:8 NIV

8 His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him.

- Paul may or may not have had the gift of healings, but here we see that he was used to heal by the laying on of hands.

Mark 16:15-20

a) In my name...they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall be healed.

- Even if every one of us does not have the gifts of healing, depending on our faith and/or the faith of the person receiving, healing can take place. This portion of scripture doesn't limit who can be used other than those who believe.

3. Where two or three are gathered.

Matt. 18:19-20 NIV

19 "Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."

a) If two or more of you agree about anything that you ask for, it will be done for you of my Father. With other scriptures from the New Testament, we can see that if we ask for the things according to his will it will be done. Healing is in his will, he accomplished this in Christ and the stripes he bore for us.

- Let us continue to seek the Lord on behalf of others.

4. Elders anointing with oil.

Mark 6:12-13

12 And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

13 And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.

- The apostles anointed with oil and healed the sick.

James 5:14-15

14 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 the Lord:

15 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.

- It does not directly say that this sickness was due to sin, but if it is, then his sins will also be forgiven.

5. By the effectual prayers of the righteous.

James 5:16-18 NET

16 So confess your sins to one another and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great effectiveness. 17 Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain and there was no rain on the land for three years and six months! 18 Then he prayed again, and the sky gave rain and the land sprouted with a harvest.

- In Greek the word for prayer used here is from a different root than that of the verb "to pray" used in the previous sentence, but it is difficult to see if any difference in meaning is intended. A righteous man is not to be understood as a special type of person whose prayer is more effective than others. Rather, this person is someone who is faithful to God and living in harmony with God's will, and therefore his prayer is indeed effective.

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- To underline the power of prayer, James uses two qualifiers to modify the verb has...power, which is literally "is strong" or "is powerful." The first qualifier is "much" and the second "working" or "being effective." The second is a participle that can be taken as passive or as middle voice. If it is passive we can translate the sentence as "the prayer is powerful when it is put into effect." Making it clear that God is the one who puts prayer into effect, TNT has rendered the sentence as "The good man's prayer is very powerful because God is at work in it." If the qualifier is a middle, the sentence is normally rendered as "the prayer is powerful when it is exercised" or "the prayer is powerful in its effect." More scholars and translations appear to favor the second possibility. Yet another possibility is to take the participle as an adjective modifying prayer, resulting in renderings like "Tremendous power is made available through a good man's earnest prayer" (Phps) or "The fervent prayer of a righteous person is very powerful" (NAB). On the whole it is probably best to follow the majority of scholars. The meaning of this sentence, then, may be most effectively brought out by rendering it as:
 1. The prayer of a good person is very [or, most] powerful and effective.
 2. The prayer of a good person has a [very] powerful effect (TEV).
 3. The prayer of an innocent person is powerful, and it can help a lot (CEV).

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- Commentators differ on whether or not this verse ties in to the previous verses (14-15) and the elders prayer of faith. There would be confession of sin involved in the previous verse if sin had caused the sickness, but this verse speaks about the "one another" confession and prayer.
- My thought is that this verse is speaking to all the members of the body. It would apply directly to two Christians with offences between them to confess and pray for one another.
- The other reason that it seems to be speaking about Christians praying for one another is the fact that James states the prayer of a righteous, a justified man, has a powerful effect. He seems to be encouraging the saints to realize that God is desiring to move on their behalf.

John 14:12-14

12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

- He wants us to realize that we have a work to do and he will be with us to accomplish that work. Asking for the things that God desires to do brings God's response.
- Is there any place in scripture that says this truth has ended?

Mark 11:23-26

23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and

be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

- If we are believing and asking for those things that God has promised then we will be less likely to doubt than if we are just asking for things to make our lives easier. We know God's word is true, it is an anchor for our soul, and it is a revelation of his heart to us. Healing is included in the promised atonement.
- He also mentions unforgiveness here and it will be touched on in the section dealing with why some people are not healed.

6. God can do special things.

Acts 19:11-12

11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:

12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

- Special- meaning extraordinary, wonders beyond those that were familiar to the disciples. We do not have God boxed up and figured out.

7. There is healing in communion.

1 Cor. 11:27-32

- Discerning the Lord's body in communion deals with remembering what he did (Isa. 53:3-6) and also considering the other members of the body and our relationship to them. As a person reflects on what the Lord accomplished, it is very possible that they could receive faith to be healed as they are partaking of that broken bread representing the body of Christ.

8. In the authority of his name.

Acts 3:1-16

- Such as I have, I give you, in the name of Jesus Christ rise up and walk. It is his name through faith in his name that made this man whole.

Mark 9:38-39

- This guy wasn't even a part of the disciples group, yet he was using Jesus' name and casting out devils.

Summary

Ultimately, there are several scriptural ways in which healings take place. It is not always just one principle or the other, sometimes there is a blending of several of the principles at a given time. The principle truths that we need to apply are:

1. Sensitivity to the Holy Spirit's leading.
2. Keeping it in the framework of clear Biblical truth.
3. The first two points will always work together. The Holy Spirit will not tell you to do something that contradicts the scriptures, they always work in harmony.

If healing is true in the New Testament what about these situations?

1. Timothy's often infirmities.

1 Tim 5:23

23 Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.

- This is only mentioned once in the scriptures.
- There is no clear understanding, only peoples' conjectures.
- The word infirmities is used for both sickness and weakness. The context usually helps to define the usage, but in this case was he sick or was he weak and weary?
- In 2 Sam. 16:2 there was food brought for the young men and wine for such as are faint or weary in the wilderness.
- Could he have had "Montezuma's revenge" from the water?
- The wine of course would be fermented, and the alcohol content would act as a purifying agent. It was in fact recognized at that time that wine was effective as a tonic and as an antidote to the effects of impure water.

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- It is unclear and we cannot use just one scripture to establish doctrine with it.

2. What about Epaphroditus?

Phil 2:25-30

25 Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

26 For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.

27 For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

28 I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.

29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation:

30 Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

- The word sick is translated both sick and weak. It is hard to determine which it was in this case because v. 30 shows that he overworked himself to make up what the Philippians failed to do.
- He could have become sick from that or he could have burned himself out to such an extent that he was close to death.
- Can we establish doctrine with this to say that Christ does not heal?

3. What about Trophimus then?

2 Tim 4:20

20 Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.

- This is the same word for sick that means weakness or sickness.
- Could Trophimus have been pushing too hard like Epaphroditus?
- Did Paul leave him to rest and recuperate his strength or did he leave him on his sick bed?
- Can we establish doctrine with this?

4. Didn't Paul have bad eyes or something?

Gal 4:13-15

13 Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first.

14 And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.

15 Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.

- Gal. 1:2 mentions the churches of Galatia (plural).
- When you look at a map of Paul's travels, you will see that Galatia includes Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.
- Here is what took place in those towns:
Antioch- Acts 15:30 expelled out of the borders
Iconium- Acts 14:5 assaulted, desired to stone them
Lystra- Acts 14:19 Paul is stoned
Derbe- Acts 14:20-22 Preached and returned back through the other cities again.
- Paul was preaching to them after being stoned and left as dead. The marks and bruising must have been horrible to look at.
- They received him even though he had been beaten and run out of those towns.
- I believe the infirmity mentioned here was his battered body from the abuse he took.
- This is not the same as his "thorn in the flesh".

5. Wasn't Paul's thorn in the flesh a sickness?

2 Cor. chapters 10-13:4

- As you read **chapter 10** you will see that the Corinthians were thinking that Paul was walking in the flesh and he addresses that.
- They were looking at outward appearances (v.7).
- **In chapter 11** he is afraid that those who come preaching another Jesus might beguile them from the simplicity in Christ.
- He says that he was not a bit inferior to the chiefest apostles.
- He asks them if it was wrong for him to abase himself in order to preach the gospel without charge to them?
- He did what he did in order to cut the ground out from under those who wanted to be considered equal with the real apostles. They were false apostles who treated the people poorly as seen in v. 20-21.
- Then, instead of boasting about his accomplishments, he shows them the things that he faced in the weakness of his flesh-being beaten, whipped, in prison, shipwrecked, multiple perils, physical discomforts, plus the care of all the churches. He called these his infirmities.
- **In chapter 12**, I believe he is talking about himself being taken up into the third heaven because right after that he says that he was given a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to buffet him so that he would not be exalted above measure.
- He asked the Lord to take it away from him and the Lord told him that His grace was sufficient for Paul and that the Lord's strength was fulfilled or accomplished in his weakness.
- So Paul came to glory in his infirmities, the stuff that happened to him that he could not control like the shipwrecks, the beatings etc. His infirmities also included the fastings, the weariness, the hunger and thirst. He realized that in his infirmities or the weakness of his flesh, the power

of Christ would rest upon him to take him through those things. The glory would belong to God, not him!

- Then he again makes the statement that he was not a bit inferior to the chiefest apostles though he be nothing.
- In **Num. 33:55** and **Judges 2:3** "thorns in their sides" were the people that they did not destroy when they were supposed to. They would be a constant vexing and reminder to the Israelites that they had not accomplished the purpose of God. In Paul's case, the thorn in his flesh would be a messenger of Satan to buffet him (to rap with the fist) in order to keep him from being lifted up because of the revelations given to him. I see two possible ways that this took place. I lean toward the first way because it seems to be what was happening in the infirmities that Paul mentioned, but the second way is plausible as well:
 1. Satan came against Job in destroying his crops, his herds, and even his children. In a similar way, this messenger of Satan was causing Paul to face perils of many kinds and was stirring up people to rise against him. All of these things hammered at Paul, showing his frailty while these super apostles (who were false) outwardly looked like the powerful ones. In his weakness, Paul saw the power and glory of God was manifest and he brought him through all of that.
 2. Paul was talking about these false apostles who were influencing the Corinthians. It is plausible that he was speaking about the trouble this was causing him in his ministry. Having to counter someone else's attacks can be very tiring, but the power of God enabled him to overcome.
- **2 Cor 13:2-4 AMP** I have already warned those who sinned formerly and all the rest also, and I warn them now again while I am absent, as I did when present on my second visit, that if I come back, I will not spare [them],
3 Since you desire and seek [perceptible] proof of the Christ Who speaks in and through me. [For He] is not weak and feeble in dealing with you, but is a mighty power within you;
4 For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He goes on living by the power of God. And though we too are weak in Him [as He was humanly weak], yet in dealing with you [we shall show ourselves] alive and strong in [fellowship with] Him by the power of God.
- Paul sums it up by saying he might be weak in a human sense, but that they would see the power of Christ in his dealing with them.
- There is nothing about the messenger of Satan being a disease or sickness in this account.

6. If we can get healed all the time then we would never die.

- This reasoning goes beyond Biblical principles and I believe it is human reasoning that affects how we accept the truth about healing. It is one more thing that would try to cause us to doubt or question God's ability.

Deut 32:48-50

48 And the Lord spake unto Moses that selfsame day, saying,

49 Get thee up into this mountain Abarim, unto mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, that is over against Jericho; and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession:

50 And die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people:

Deut 34:7 NIV

7 Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were not weak nor his

strength gone.

- When Moses went up the mountain to die, he was just as strong as ever and his eye as keen as ever. It seems that he went up to the top and died because the number of his days was up.

Ps 139:16 NASU

16 Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written
The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them.

Job 14:4-5 NIV

4 Who can bring what is pure from the impure? No one!

5 Man's days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.

- Only God knows the number of days that each one of us has, but it is limited.

Heb 9:27

27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

- We will all die (except those at the end- 1 Thes. 4:17).
- We have come to expect that the usual way a person dies is because of sickness. This is not always the case and being healed by the Lord on a continual basis would not nullify death taking place.

Why are some people not healed then?

There are several reasons why we aren't always healed. Some of these reasons can be addressed by us and some of them are beyond our control.

There is a scriptural principle that must be looked at first in order to understand how we can see change in all of these areas. This principle is found in:

Ps 123:1-2

Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.

2 Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us.

- In the areas where we see we need to change, we need to look to the Lord to help us.
- In the areas where it is beyond our control, we need to look to the one who controls all things.

In our own strength or our own ability, we can really accomplish nothing. It is by the Spirit that we put to death the things of the flesh. We must be as the servants who are looking to the master for whatever he is desiring to do. It is his leading, his Spirit, and his word that will change us.

We must come to Jesus to see what he has to say about our circumstances and what he would have us do. Scripture says that without him we can do nothing, so why do we continually try to do everything on our own? He knows what we are like (Ps. 139) but he desires for us to develop our relationship to him. He wants us also to get to know him!

Our needs are major in our eyes and we cannot always see why these things are so. Our focus usually turns to our needs rather than to his purposes. We must understand that his purposes prevail above our needs, therefore, we need to come to him for direction and ministry into our hearts.

The following are Biblical reasons of why some people are not healed. We may have one or more of these things in our hearts and lives. Only the Lord knows what is in our heart and what is needed in our lives, so even in the times that we are not healed we need to keep our eyes on the Master to see if he reveals something in our hearts or whether or not he wants us to hold steadfast in him for a time.

1. They haven't heard and therefore they cannot believe in what they do not know.

- In **Rom. 10:14** it says how can they call on him on whom they have not believed, and how will they believe unless they hear. This is regarding salvation, but the principle is true for healing as well since faith comes by hearing the word of Christ.
- This type of person needs to be taught what the scriptures say.

2. Unbelief

- In **Matt. 13:54-58** Jesus could not do many mighty works in his own home town because of their unbelief. If unbelief can restrict the Son of God, how much more in our lives where we at times struggle with unbelief as well the the people we are ministering to.
- In **Matt. 17:19-21** we see the disciples struggling to heal, even though they had been used in many healings and Jesus said it was because of their unbelief. He added that this kind can only come out by prayer and fasting.
- This is also why we need to keep our eyes on the master, so he can speak to our hearts and instruct us.

3. Hardened hearts

- This can come about through many areas such as:
- **Discouragement:** In **Col. 3:21** fathers are told not to provoke their children to anger lest they be become disheartened and lose their motivation. That is the effect of discouragement. We also see it in **Num. 21:4** and **Num. 32:9**. In these verses the children of Israel become discouraged because of the way and because of the evil report given by their brethren.
- **Bitterness:** Pointed, sharp, keen, pungent, describing a person whose behavior now is offensive to God and obnoxious to men. **Deut 29:18 NIV** Make sure there is no man or woman, clan or tribe among you today whose heart turns away from the Lord our God to go and worship the gods of those nations; make sure there is no root among you that produces such bitter poison. **Heb. 12:15** shows that it is something that can cause you to fall short of God's grace-you cannot get too much harder than that.
- **Misunderstood promises (believing for something the scriptures do not really promise):** Failure to receive an answer to prayer that we thought was legitimate but in reality was not firmly based on the scriptures. Since we do not always understand immediately that our prayer was not one that God promised to answer, we become disillusioned and feel that God is not dealing with us as he does with others.
- **Failure to receive in the past:** We have prayed for healing in the past or for some other thing and it seemed like God did not care to answer us. When it seems like it happens more than once, there is a tendency to not ask for fear of more failure. We seem to block it out rather than take it to the Lord and ask what it is that he wants to do.
- **Sin:** **Heb. 3:13**...lest you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.
- **Not understanding:** In the parable of the sower in **Matt. 13** the good or soft ground are those with understanding, all the other ground do not produce fruit. In **Matt. 8:15-17** the disciples forgot to bring bread, Jesus asked if they still had hardened hearts- he said don't you understand,

don't you have ears to hear, eyes to see, and don't you remember what I did?

4. Unresolved offences: In **Mark 11:22-26** tells us how to pray in order to receive and ends up saying that we need to forgive or our heavenly father will not forgive us. **Matt. 5:23-24** tells us to be reconciled to our brother before we offer our gift to God. He is concerned about the condition of our hearts-it will affect us.

5. It is a chastening: **1 Cor.11:20-34** is speaking about not showing the proper care for the other members of the body of Christ. He says that if we take communion unworthily (an unbecoming manner; irreverently; inappropriately; in a careless manner) we will be bringing judgment on ourselves. That is the reason why many of them were weak and sickly, and some had even died. The scripture continues to say that if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. We can do something about it. He also says that when he chastens us this way, it is so that we are not condemned with the world. My question is, once you acknowledge and respond, do you continue to get disciplined? Chastening and discipline are always to accomplish a purpose but the chastening ends at some time. Do we have to continue suffering once we have learned obedience?

If suffering sickness is the will of God, are we not thwarting the will of God in seeking a physician to help us? Are we going against his will by seeking a physician if we believe that God desires us to continue suffering?

6. Some things only come about through prayer and fasting.

Matt 17:19-21 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?

20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

- We already touched on this verse when discussing unbelief. Their unbelief kept them from doing what was needed but we see Jesus adding that there is also a need to seek the Father through fasting and prayer at times.

7. God's timing:

John 9:1-3 And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

- This man's blindness was not due to sin. In the timing of God, Jesus came along and healed him so that God would be glorified.

Acts 3:2-6; 4:22

2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;

3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.

4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.

5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.

6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of

Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.

4:22 For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.

- Here we have a lame man who never could walk and had to beg for support. He must have been there when Jesus entered the temple during his three and a half yrs. of ministry to the Jews. It seems that either he did not have the faith at the time or it was part of the timing of God in order to show that Jesus was resurrected and his Spirit was now ministering through the believers.
- God's timing is an area that we cannot control, we must just keep our eyes focused on him and listen to what he would tell us to be doing at this time.

8. The mold is not clear.

Rom 6:17

17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

- The word 'form' in this verse helps us to see that what we have been taught has molded or made an impress upon our lives. The thing that we have to look at is whether or not we have been molded according to the pattern of the scriptures.

Heb 8:5

See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the **pattern** shewed to thee in the mount.

- This word pattern is the same word as used as form in the previous verse.

Form: NT:5179 In secular Greek 'tupos' is used to describe the process of casting and forming and refers both to that which has been cast and to that which itself forms, whether a mold and its impression (e.g., a signet ring or a die [for coins]) or a raised form such as a relief or a sculpture. This basic meaning develops from the concrete to the abstract, so that 'tupos' comes to be used of "pattern, model, copy, prototype, outline sketch, general impression, version of a document."

(from Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament © 1990 by William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. All rights reserved.)

NT:5179

The metaphor is that of a cast or frame into which molten material is poured so as to take its shape. The Gospel is the mould; those who are obedient to its teachings become conformed to Christ, whom it presents.

(from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.)

- The teaching that we have received- the full gospel, is a mold or pattern and our lives are conformed to it. What if the mold that we received was imperfect? What if a king's signet ring was half filled with dirt when he sealed a decree? Would it be recognized for what it truly was? What we have learned and what has shaped our understanding needs to be compared to the scriptural truths in order to have the true pattern.

9. We are not walking in love as he wants us to.

1 John 3:17-22

17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

- My understanding of this scripture is that if we are not loving our neighbors as we ought to, our hearts will condemn us. If our hearts condemn us, we cannot hide it from God because he knows all things and we will not be able to ask him for things in confidence. If our hearts do not condemn us, we will have confidence toward God and will receive from him.

10. Having a wounded spirit.

Prov 15:13

13 A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

Prov 17:22

22 A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.

Prov 18:14

14 The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?

- The underlined words are all the same Hebrew word.
- Sorrow of the heart can come from many areas.

2 Cor 2:7

7 So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.

2 Cor 7:10

10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

- Some of the areas already mentioned as hindering faith might be the cause of the heavy sorrow or it may be something totally different. Regardless of the cause, you can see that such a person would have a hard time receiving because of the wounding they feel. Whatever the sorrow, we have a Man of Sorrows who took those upon himself for us.
- **Isa 61:1-3** The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;
2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;
3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.

11. Self-pity

- As we have our eyes set upon our own circumstances, the things that are happening to us, our focus on our own problems will cause us to be blind to what the Lord desires to do. The closest scripture that relates to this is not totally the same definition but shows where the attitude could lead to.

2 Tim 3:2 AMP

2 For people will be lovers of self and [utterly] self-centered, lovers of money and aroused by an inordinate [greedy] desire for wealth, proud and arrogant and contemptuous boasters. They will be abusive (blasphemous, scoffing), disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy and profane.

- Self-pity is one form of selfishness.

Num 11:4-6

4 And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?

5 We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick:

6 But our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.

- Their self pity caused them to speak disparagingly of God's gracious and miraculous provision for them. Self pity is a destructive force in our hearts.

12. Doubt.

Matt 14:31

31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

Matt 28:17

17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

Doubt: NT:1365 To doubt, waver, hesitate, be uncertain.

(from The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament © 1992 by AMG International, Inc. Revised Edition, 1993)

NT:1365 It is a figurative word taken either from a person standing where two ways meet and not knowing which to choose (inclining sometimes to one, sometimes to the other), or from the quivering motion of a balance when the weights on either side are approximately equal (when first one side, then the other, seems to be predominate).

(from The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament © 1992 by AMG International, Inc. Revised Edition, 1993)

NT:1365 to have doubts concerning something, doubt, waver

(from A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature, Third Edition. Copyright © 2000 by The University of Chicago. All rights reserved.)

- There are many ways in which doubt comes into play in our lives but the best way to eliminate uncertainty is to find out what the Lord has promised and look to him for direction.

Another definition for doubt but similar:

Acts 10:20

20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

Rom 4:20

20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

Rom 14:23 NIV

23 But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

James 1:5-8 NIV

6 But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

Doubt: NT:1374 pertaining to being uncertain about the truth of something - 'doubleminded, doubting, doubter.

(from Greek-English Lexicon Based on Semantic Domain. Copyright © 1988 United Bible Societies, New York. Used by permission.)

NT:1374 of two minds, undecided

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NT:1374 pertaining to being uncertain about the truth of something, doubting, hesitating,

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- The world wants us to think one way and God wants us to think his way. Depending on how long we were influenced by the world or by our lack of understanding of God's word and ways, we may have thoughts that battle in our minds or hearts and we will hesitate to respond or act

upon God's truths.

13. Pride.

1 John 2:16

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

James 4:6

6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

- Pride will keep us from submitting to the Lord. Humility will bring the grace of God into our lives.

14. Lack of faith.

- We will look at this area in a much greater detail than the others because of the misunderstanding of what faith is and because there are so many things from the secular world that have influenced us and our understanding of it.

The age of reason:

We are living in a day of reason. Our minds have been flooded with the philosophies of ungodly men who have placed their carnal knowledge against the knowledge of God. A principle of God is the one of sowing and reaping. We are seeing in our day the fruits of these humanistic endeavors which are leading us to what this scripture speaks about:

2 Tim 3:1-5 NIV

3 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. 2 People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, 4 treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.

- We have all been influenced by these types of teachings to one degree or another because they have been taught in our schools and universities and are found in the media and society. We are now reaping the fruit of the humanistic teaching. This is the reason why we need to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Rom. 12:2) and learn to put on Christ.

Reason was why the Israelites ended up roaming the desert for 40 yrs. Look at what they thought:

Num 13:31-33 NIV

31 But the men who had gone up with him said, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are." 32 And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, "The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. 33 We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them."

- Their human reasoning was correct in the fact that they themselves could not defeat such people, but God had said that he would be with them and they could conquer the land. Reasoning robbed them of having faith in what the Lord had said. Faith is not understood by human reasoning.

Reasoning without the perspective of God's word is one of the biggest things we have to face. We are used to seeing and understanding the world in a certain light, but once we come to Christ, we are given the opportunity to put on a new man, to put on Christ, and begin to see from His perspective.

To the natural man, a man without Christ, the principles of faith that God calls us to operate in seem wholly inadequate to do the things that God calls us to do. May our minds be renewed to see faith in God's word as being over and above human reason.

Human reasoning does not take into account that our battles are spiritual ones. These two verses show us that:

2 Cor 10:3-5

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:

4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

Eph 6:12

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Faith is not presumption:

- Presumption is belief without evidence and faith is belief in action with it (Charles S. Price).

Faith is not just believing:

- James 2:19 says that even the devils believe that there is one God and they tremble. They surely don't have faith.
- One of the struggles that people have had with faith is trying to believe hard enough about something in order to have it happen. It is not by our efforts that faith comes. The following truths will help to clarify how we can grow in faith.

Heb 11:1 AMP

NOW FAITH is the assurance (the confirmation, the title deed) of the things [we] hope for, being the proof of things [we] do not see and the conviction of their reality [faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses].

- Faith is the title-deed and the proof or evidence of the things we hope for, it is what enables us to see as real the things that cannot be seen. What we need to learn then is how to get faith. If faith were something that we could work up at any given time, we wouldn't really have a need to rely upon the Lord.
- How do we get this evidence?

Heb 6:10-20 New English Translation

11 But we passionately want each of you to demonstrate the same eagerness for the fulfillment of your hope until the end, 12 so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and perseverance inherit the promises.

13 Now when God made his promise to Abraham, since he could swear by no one greater, he swore by himself, 14 saying, "Surely I will bless you greatly and multiply your descendants abundantly." 15 And so by persevering, Abraham inherited the promise. 16 For people swear by something greater than themselves, and the oath serves as a confirmation to end all dispute. 17 In the same way God wanted to demonstrate more clearly to the heirs of the promise that his purpose was unchangeable, and so he intervened with an oath, 18 so that we who have found refuge in him may find strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us through two unchangeable things (His promise and his oath-emphasis mine), since it is impossible for God to lie. 19 We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, sure and steadfast, which reaches inside

behind the curtain, 20 where Jesus our forerunner entered on our behalf, since he became a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.

- The surety of God's promise and his oath are evidence for us. They give us a strong encouragement and exhortation to seize hold of this hope set before us.
- He does not expect us to 'just believe', but he wants us to see that his promises are sure and steadfast, something that we can trust. In Ps. 138:2 the psalmist says that God has magnified his word above his name. If his word is no good, his name is no good. He wants us to see that we can totally trust his word.
- Presumption is believing that you can walk on water because Peter did. You can try and try to believe that it will happen, but you will fall short of accomplishing that. However, Peter was given a word from Jesus when he said "Come." That was all the evidence Peter needed. He believed the word of Jesus.
- God's promises are sure and steadfast. As we ascertain what God has said about a truth or principle in his Word, we can look to him about seeing that promise made alive in our hearts.
- All that we see and want to appropriate are still done in conjunction with prayer and the moving of the Holy Spirit. He will help us to see if we need to have some other principles instilled in our hearts in order to receive what we desire or he will show us if we have areas in our lives that would hinder us from receiving. Always take it to the Lord.

Understanding faith

Rom 10:17 NASU

17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

- It comes by hearing and yet we know that everyone who hears does not have faith. We must look at what he means by hearing in order to understand what this verse means.

There are several times in scripture where Jesus says, "If you have ears to hear, let him hear." One of the clearest ones to me is found in Mark:

Mark 4:24-25 AMP

24 And He said to them, Be careful what you are hearing. The measure [of thought and study] you give [to the truth you hear] will be the measure [of virtue and knowledge] that comes back to you — and more [besides] will be given to you who hear.

25 For to him who has will more be given; and from him who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away [by force],

- Hearing, as mentioned in Rom. 10:17, has this principle involved in it, one of paying attention to what you have heard and weighing it out in your heart. It involves more than just having heard a truth or teaching with your ears.

Here are four scriptural areas where a passage from Isaiah 6:8-10 is quoted in varying degrees. It speaks of the people hearing but not hearing because their hearts are dull (calloused, impervious or insensitive) and their ears are dull (to hear heavily, slow of understanding) of hearing. We begin to see what it is that hinders and what it is that opens our hearts to faith.

- To those who struggle with the fact that the peoples' hearts were hardened in the Isaiah passage, there is a teaching called "Does God really harden peoples hearts" in the School of Foundations for Ministry archives under the heading "Predestination-A Quick Look" that will show you that God does not arbitrarily harden hearts, it always involves the individual's choice and God lets

them have their way.

John 12:37-40

37 But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:

38 That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?

39 Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again,

40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

- This verse quotes Isaiah about believing the report, the same verse that is used in Rom.10:16, right before Paul says faith comes by hearing.
- John quotes Isaiah about the hardening of the hearts and seeing with their eyes. The full quotation includes making their ears heavy.
- Seeing was not believing for them. You would think that after seeing so many miracles that they would believe. Seeing is not always believing.

Matt 13:12-23

12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

17 For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

18 Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;

21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

- In this portion we see that they have closed their own eyes to the truth and therefore do not understand it.
- Others hear and receive the word but either do not have depth of soil in their hearts or allow other things to take priority and choke out the word and therefor it does not produce the desired

fruit in them.

- The good ground hears and understands it and produces fruit.

Luke 8:8-15

And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

9 And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be?

10 And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

12 Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

13 They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

15 But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

- Luke 8:15 Honest and good heart. Two Greek words (kalos and agathos), both meaning "good", are used. The former connotes beauty; the latter, nobility or uprightness.
(from The Wycliffe Bible Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1962 by Moody Press. All rights reserved.)
- Luke 8:15 Professor Bruce ('Parabolic Teaching of Christ,' ch. 1.) remarks that "the man who united the two qualities expressed by the term 'honest' (better rendered 'noble') and 'good,' represented the beau-ideal (the perfect type or model-clarification mine) of manhood. He was one whose aim was noble, and who was generously devoted to his aim. The expression rendered 'honest' (better translated 'noble,') has reference to aims or chief ends, and describes one whose mind is raised above moral vulgarity, and is bent, not on money-making and such low pursuits, but on the attainment of wisdom, holiness, and righteousness. The epithet rendered 'good' denotes generous self-abandonment in the prosecution of lofty ends; large-heartedness, magnanimous, overflowing devotion.
(from The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright © 2001, 2003, 2005, 2006 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)
- In this portion we see that the good ground is an honest and good heart. This is the heart that receives the word, that hears and understands, and there is fruit produced in the life of such an one.

Mark 4:20

20 And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

- **Receive:** NT:3858 to acknowledge something to be correct, accept
(from A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature, Third Edition. Copyright © 2000 by The University of Chicago. All rights reserved.)
- This hearing of the word includes accepting it as the truth.
- In these parables, the seed remains the same (the gospel), but the condition of the ground (the heart) is different.

Summary of the verses on hearing.

Faith comes by hearing the word of Christ. In order to hear, we see that a person must receive the word (acknowledge the word to be correct), have a good and honest heart that gives thought to the truth it hears which will produce understanding and fruit.

Now we begin to see what things are needful for faith to arise in our lives. There are things that we can do to prepare our hearts to be good ground and there are things that the Lord does through life's circumstances to prepare our hearts. We have no control over the things that the Lord is doing other than responding to him in a Biblical manner, but we can do some steps according to scripture that will help to prepare our hearts to receive his word.

- The truth that stands out in its simplicity for growing in faith is this:

The word of God is the seed. The seed has life in itself. The seed needs good ground to grow in. Therefore, if we are desiring to have more faith, we do not have to go through mental gymnastics or some difficult striving and frustration in trying to manufacture faith. Our responsibility is to have a heart or prepared ground to receive the seed. Faith comes out of the seed taking root. Faith is produced by the word of God and the Holy Spirit. We must have the proper soil.

As you look at most of the things that hinder faith, you will see that it is something concerning the condition of the heart, which is the soil that the seed needs to grow in.

- This truth enables us to minister much more effectively to those who do not receive healing immediately. Instead of giving them the much worn phrase "You need more faith" and leaving them to try to figure out what that means, we can help them to see how our hearts can be opened up to hearing and understanding the word of God and growing in our faith.

What things can we do to prepare our hearts?

The heart is the primary recipient of the things of God. In the following scriptures we will see how the Lord views these principles and concepts and why they are invaluable to us having God move in our lives.

Ps 34:18

18 The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

- As you will see from the other scriptures using this word, it is speaking about those whose hearts are broken from their own selfishness and ability to stand on their own or those who are broken in heart because of the scorn of others which is undeserved.
- **Broken heart: Hebrew 7665:** A verb meaning to break, to burst, to break in pieces, to break down, to break up, to smash, to shatter, to bring to birth. The word is most often used to express bursting or breaking.
(Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament)
- **Contrite: OT:1793** An adjective meaning destruction, a crumbled substance, an object crushed into a powder, or pulverized dust. Thus, by extension, can mean humble or contrite. God is the healer and rescuer of one who is crushed in spirit (Ps 34:18[:19]). He also lives with those whose spirits are contrite and humble (Isa 57:15). It comes from the Hebrew verb (1792), meaning to crush or to beat to pieces.
(The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament)
- When we are strong in our own strength and abilities we rarely lean upon the Lord. In the case of a broken and contrite heart-the Lord is near them.

Some scriptures using the same or similar words:

Ps 38:8

8 I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.

- In these verses, David is affected by his sin. He is acknowledging to the Lord that he sees and

recognizes it. David is feeling crushed by it.

Ps 51:17

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

- As you read the context of this Psalm, you will see that David is broken in heart because of the realization of his sin against God. He sees himself in perspective against the holiness of God. He acknowledges the truth of who and what he is and desires to be cleansed and to walk with the Lord.
- The Lord does not despise or hold in contempt a broken and contrite heart.
- Two ways that we can prepare our hearts to be good soil:

1. **Ps. 51:6** says, "You desire truth in the inward parts...". Are we totally honest with ourselves and with the Lord? This is a starting point.

2. Acknowledging our shortcomings and turning from them. This would come from a heart that is impacted by the comparison of our life with what the Lord would desire us to be. In **2 Cor 7:9-11** we see that godly sorrow produces a repentance that produces a heart that is swift in moving to respond to the truth.

Prov 15:13

13 A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

- David felt the sorrow in his heart, sorrow for his sin. He wanted to walk with the Lord. There is a point of too much sorrow and the negative effects that come with it, but there is also a place of sorrow and brokenness that allows God to minister into the depths of our hearts and to change us.

Jer 23:9-10

9 Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the Lord, and because of the words of his holiness.

10 For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing the land mourneth; the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up, and their course is evil, and their force is not right.

- We can also have hearts that are broken by the sinfulness we see around us. We know how God will deal with sin and our hearts are broken because we understand what will happen if people do not repent from their own ways.
- Learning to see from God's perspective will cause us to be more sensitive and even broken within because we understand that sin will be punished. It will contain disappointment at seeing people disregard God's ways but can also include the brokenness that cries out because we see their ultimate end if they continue in their ways.
- Jeremiah had a heart that trembled at God's word and it produced sorrow in seeing what the other people were doing. His was a tender heart for the word of the Lord.

Isa 66:2

2 For all those things hath mine hand made, and those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

- A man who is willing to humble himself before the Lord and who trembles at his word. A man who fears God and is willing to lay down his life and ways for the Lord.
- Poor OT:6041: An adjective meaning poor, afflicted. It refers to those who are suffering, in a state of poverty, oppression, misery from various causes:

(from The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament Copyright © 2003 by AMG Publishers. All rights reserved.)

- Contrite spirit: A spirit that is broken, crushed, or deeply affected by sin. It stands opposed to a spirit that is proud, haughty, self-confident, and self-righteous.
(from Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)
- Do we think lightly of our sin? We need to continually align our hearts with how God views sin. The more we read and see God's dealings with mankind, the greater our understanding of the depravity of sin.
- It is to this type of man that the Lord will have a regard! Isn't this the desire of our hearts?

Isa 57:15

15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

- As we humble ourselves before him and find our hearts broken and crushed by our sin and lives apart from him, he will revive and strengthen us in order that we may live with him and in his ways.
- He dwells with such a heart!

Jer 4:3-4

3 For thus saith the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.

4 Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.

- The expression, "Break up your fallow ground" (Hosea 10:12; Jeremiah 4:3) means, "Do not sow your seed among thorns", i.e., break off all your evil habits; clear your hearts of weeds, in order that they may be prepared for the seed of righteousness. Land was allowed to lie fallow that it might become more fruitful; but when in this condition, it soon became overgrown with thorns and weeds. The cultivator of the soil was careful to "break up" his fallow ground, i.e., to clear the field of weeds, before sowing seed in it. So says the prophet, "Break off your evil ways, repent of your sins, cease to do evil, and then the good seed of the word will have room to grow and bear fruit."
Easton's 1897 Bible Dictionary
- They are told to break up the ground of their hearts that has been plowed but left unseeded. The second plowing would remove the weeds and thorns which represented their idolatrous ways. We may have areas like that as well, areas that we haven't wanted to deal with or look real close at, because we know that they are wrong and we just haven't wanted to deal with them. God wants our hearts to be tilled ground so that his word (as a seed) may take root and begin a new crop in our lives, a crop filled with the fruit of the Spirit.
- The circumcision of the heart speaks of the same thing, a cutting away or turning from the hardness of our hearts:

Deut 10:16-17 NIV

16 Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer.

Deut 9:6 NIV

6 Understand, then, that it is not because of your righteousness that the Lord your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stiff-necked people.

Deut 9:13-14 NIV

13 And the Lord said to me, "I have seen this people, and they are a stiff-necked people indeed!

Deut 31:27-28 NIV

27 For I know how rebellious and stiff-necked you are. If you have been rebellious against the Lord while I am still alive and with you, how much more will you rebel after I die!

Deut 30:1-3,6 NIV

30 When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come upon you and you take them to heart wherever the Lord your God disperses you among the nations, 2 and when you and your children return to the Lord your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today, 3 then:.....

6 The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live.

Hos 10:12

12 Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.

- It is time to break up our fallow ground!!! A broken heart is plowed ground.
- The Lord wants us to turn from our sin and our ways to his ways. It is time to reconsider where our hearts and desires are and to be willing to see the thorns and weeds removed.

Ps 138:6

6 Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.

James 4:6-10

6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

1 Peter 5:5-6

5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

- We can humble ourselves. It is much easier for us to do it rather than having the Lord allow circumstances to come into our lives that would humble us.

John 12:23-26

23 And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

25 He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

- Unless we die to ourselves, we will not bring forth much fruit. Are we willing to consider ourselves as dead since Christ died in our place and live for him instead (**2 Cor. 5:14-15**)?

Gal 2:20

20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself

for me.

- Are we crucified with him? Who is our life lived for now? The recognition of this truth will help us to see if we are dead and live only for him and his purposes.

How does all of this tie together?

God is dealing with us in order to help us to be conformed into the image of his son, Jesus. He is showing us through the scriptures that he desires all of us, every bit of us—our hearts, lives, minds, souls, property, etc.

Many of us have areas of our lives that are like fallow ground that the seed of his Word cannot take root in. That ground needs to be broken up and tilled, removing the thorns and weeds. It is a heart of repentance.

Sometimes that tilling comes through things that bring sorrow into our lives and seem to crush us within our hearts. At times it may seem that all that we are or think of as our identity in this world gets washed away in a flood of circumstances. Othertimes, it is the Spirit of the Lord revealing sinful areas of our lives and the sorrow of our position before the Lord brings a broken-heartedness. There are also times when we come to recognize an area in our lives as we read the Word of God and we become humble before the Lord as we realize this area as sin.

All of this leads us to a point of tenderness before the Lord, a penitent heart, a receptive heart, a heart that can be molded by the Lord. As some of the scriptures showed, we should consider ourselves as dead and we should be living our lives for Christ. Obviously we don't arrive at that point when we first get saved, it is a journey that we are on day by day. The only way to arrive there as the Lord desires is to learn how to keep a tender, contrite, tilled heart before him continually. This is the heart that He says he is close to, will not despise, that is an acceptable sacrifice, the heart that he heals, the one that he looks to, the one that he will live with, the one he will save, the one he will have respect to, and the one that he will revive. These are some awesome things that he speaks about regarding getting close to us!!!

The Lord speaks of a wonderfully special and personal relationship with those who are humble, contrite, and broken before him.

Let your heart be in such a place before him by studying his Word, applying it, asking him to show you areas that he would desire change in, receiving reproof and instruction, and yield yourself to him as life's circumstances bring sorrow and loss. Do not let your heart get bitter or hard in any way, go to the Lord and cast your cares on him because he cares for you. God will use many types of things and circumstances to get our attention, it is up to us to look to him to see what his desire is at that given time, just as the servant looks to his master. Job did not understand all that was happening to him and he had some areas that the Lord corrected, but overall Job kept his heart open to the Lord.

NOTE: These are primary areas that will affect our reception of the word of Christ. In other words, it will affect the faith that we have!

- A heart that is broken and contrite before the Lord is ground that will receive the seed, the word of God and the end result of that is faith comes. Faith comes by hearing, hearing comes from an understanding heart, and the scriptures shows us what we can do to have such a heart.

The Holy Spirit is involved in all of this as well.

The Holy Spirit is the one who opens up the word of God to us. Without him, we could not begin to comprehend the things of the Lord, let alone have faith in it.

Matt 16:16-17

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

- It is the Father that reveals to us that Jesus is the Christ.

John 6:44-48 NIV

44 "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. 46 No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. 47 I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life.

- The Father does the drawing, and this is seen through the good news, the gospel of grace. This truth was in the Old Testament and some saw it and others rejected it. (**2 Thess 2:13-14 NIV** But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. 14 He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.)
- The principle of being taught by God is mentioned in two Old Testament verses: Jer. 31:33 and Isa. 54:13. I believe that this is accomplished through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. I believe that he is the one who establishes the laws in our hearts as seen in the next couple of scriptures.

2 Cor 3:6 NIV

6 He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant- — not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

- This New Covenant that we are under is one of the Spirit.

1 Cor 2:9-16

9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

- To an unsaved person, the Bible can seem confusing and boring, like reading the phone book. It

is the Holy Spirit who opens up our understanding.

- Can we as Christians generate faith by our mental efforts? If faith comes by hearing the word, is it not the Holy Spirit who is involved in illuminating the word in our hearts and causing faith to grow in our hearts?
- Even Jesus did what the Father told him to do so how much more should we pay attention to what the Father is saying to us by His Spirit?

John 8:28-29 NIV

28 So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am [the one I claim to be] and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. 29 The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him."

John 12:49-50 NIV

49 For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. 50 I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say."

John 15:4 NIV

4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

What things should we understand about faith?

- We must acknowledge our own weakness and inability. Remember, the natural man cannot comprehend the things of the Spirit. In **2 Cor. 11 and 12**, Paul said he would rather glory in his infirmities so that the power of Christ could rest upon him. We will not walk in faith as long as we are depending upon ourselves.
- Find out God's plan and then live and act and work accordingly. Our ways will lead to death, but the path and plan that God has will last. Let Jesus lead you down his path for he said, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light." **Eph 5:17** Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. As you read from **Eph. 4:26** on down to this verse, you will see what some of the will of the Lord is. There are other portions that help us to determine the will of God and the promises of God for our lives. As we do that, we will continue to grow in faith.
- The scripture in **James 2:26** says that faith without works is dead. We must take the promises of God and begin to use them. An example would be in resisting the devil. We can desire that Satan leave us alone or we can take the promises of God and draw near to him and resist (an action on our part) the devil and he will flee.

When the children of Israel took Jericho, the Lord said Jericho would be delivered into their hands and told them what they needed to do. They acted on the word of the Lord and the walls tumbled down. The Israelites knew that the walls did not come down because of their marching, the walls came down through the power of God because they were obedient to do what he said.

- God does not always answer in the same way. Otherwise, we would not end up looking to him

for his leading but would expect him to just operate routinely. In **2 Sam. 5:17-25** we see the Philistines coming against David twice. The Lord gave him different directions for each time. It is that way with faith, sometimes God answers immediately, and sometimes we have to wait. If you are waiting in faith, you are not worrying for faith in waiting does so in peace.

- Faith is the title-deed to what we hope for. **Rom. 8:24-25** show us that what we hope for is not seen. Faith is the assurance, the evidence, the title-deed to what cannot be seen. This is another reason why human reasoning cannot grasp the things that faith can. In Hebrews the 11th chapter, there are many examples of those who were told of things that they could not see, but by faith they saw them afar off and were persuaded of them, embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth.

Gen 15:6-7 NASU

6 Then he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

OT:539 A verb meaning to be firm, to build up, to support, to nurture, or to establish. The primary meaning is that of providing stability and confidence, like a baby would find in the arms of a parent. (from The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament Copyright © 2003 by AMG Publishers. All rights reserved.)

- Faith should be stable and confident, like a baby in the arms of a parent. The baby doesn't struggle to have confidence, doesn't try to work something up. When we find ourselves struggling to believe, trying to crank up enough faith to receive something, is it really the faith that comes from God?

Six steps that have helped others get to a place of healing. (From The Sick are Healed by Charles S. Price).

I added this section since Charles Price saw a lot of healings take place in his ministry and perhaps it will be something that will minister to some who are struggling.

The first step.

- Get a hold of a promise and stand on it. Recognize that it is for you. Don't try to cover the whole world with that promise, but tell the Lord that in His infinite mercy and love He has condescended to give that promise to you. It is your priceless possession. When you realize it, you will treasure it in your heart more than you have ever treasured any jewel in your life. You will hold it so close to you that you will never want to let it go. You will declare, "It is mine-mine-mine."

The second step.

- Bring your burden, your problem, your need, to the Lord and leave it there. Refuse to worry about it. Whether or not there is any manifestation of divine healing power, hold the Lord to His promise and tell Him that you have laid your burden at His nail-pierced feet. He is the Burden Bearer. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him. He assumed our sins. That is the reason why we do not have to carry them any more. He died our death and gave us His life. He bore our sickness and carried our sorrows. Because of the greatness of His heart and love, He invites us to come with our burdens and leave them at His feet.
- So many times we bring our burdens to the Lord, intercede about them, supplicate about them, and then promptly take them away with us, only to bring them back with us the following night. To do so is totally unscriptural and shows a lack of faith in God. Bring your burdens and lay them at His nail-pierced feet and say, "Dear Lord Jesus, though all the world be false, Your promises are sure. Forgive me for my worry, for my fretting, for my unbelief. I lay my burdens

before you. In Your Word You have said that You care for me."

When we see the lilies spinning in distress,
Taking thought to manufacture loveliness;
When we see the birds all building barns for store,
'Twill be time for us to worry--not before.

The third step.

- Put your trust in the Lord. Do not put your trust in feeling or in manifestation or in any physical demonstration. Worry looks at self but faith looks to God. Fretting looks down to the earth and beholds its coldness and its meanness. Trust looks at the skies and sees the star of hope, the morning star of the promise that heralds the coming of the Sun of Righteousness. When we put our trust in the Lord, we shall discover that our worry will have gone. Do not think of self, but keep your eyes fast on Jesus. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

The fourth step.

- Delight yourself in the Lord. Has it ever occurred to you that you can never delight yourself in the Lord unless you are standing on the promises? You could not come up this fourth step unless you have taken the other three. Delight and worry do not mix. Unless there is trust in the Lord and confidence in His promises, there never could be delight. On the other hand it is almost impossible to climb up the first three steps and not put your foot on the fourth rung of the ladder. Delight is something that comes because doubt is gone.
- It is at this point that faith really begins to take hold. Faith believes before it receives and expresses itself in joy. Faith says, "Thank You," on the basis of the fact that the gift has been promised, and gets so happy about it that it commences to praise. Anybody can feel delighted about it after the gift has been received, but it takes real faith to delight oneself in the gift on the basis of the promise. Whenever I come across people who have prayed through until they have touched the Throne, and who are shouting the victory, I see people in whose lives faith is operating in a mighty way.

The fifth step.

- Rest in the Lord. Wait patiently for Him. Intercession has its place, but there must come a time when intercession ceases and praise commences. Supplication will reach the ears of God, but the answer comes on the wings of faith and trust. There might not be very much faith in the prayer, "Give me, Lord," but there certainly has to be faith when you say, "Thank you, Lord." Oh, that the saints of God would learn the lesson of resting in the Lord and waiting, even if we have to wait patiently-patiently-for Him. We have His blessed Word to assure us that He will give us the desires of our heart.

"There is a secret place of rest,
God's saints alone may know;
Thou shalt not find it east nor west,
Though seeking to and fro;
A cell where Jesus is the door,
His love the only key;
Who enter will go out no more,

But there with Jesus be."

The sixth step.

- Give God the glory. Don't compare your faith with the faith of others. Do not become spiritually proud. Do not allow self satisfaction to exalt you in your own esteem more than what you really are. Our blessed Master is the author of every good and perfect gift. To Him we owe our everything. To Him belong our praise and our adoration. To Him alone we bow the knee in reverence and worship. God has condescended to talk with man. Divinity has breathed upon humanity. The jewelry of Heaven has been given to the poor undeserving creatures of earth. Always give God the glory and then God will give you His smile.

Because healing is included in the atonement, we can appropriate healing. It is part of our inheritance. If it is not in the atonement, it has not been purchased and each healing is only by the mercy of God; but if it is in the atonement we can come with boldness, knowing that our Lord has paid for our sickness and carried our sorrows.

Why we need to understand these things.

The faith movement brought out some good things regarding healing and the working of God in our lives today. With this movement though, has been a lack of Biblical ministry to those who have not been healed. The basic statement of "You don't have enough faith and you need to have more faith" has produced the idea in people that if they believe hard enough, they would increase in faith. Many have gone through mental gymnastics trying to believe and produce faith through their own efforts. In failing to be able to do so, many have been discouraged or disheartened and have believed that healing is not for them.

We have learned fairly successfully how to minister and strengthen those who struggle to walk with Christ as a new creation. We turn to passages to encourage, instruct, and exhort them in the fact that we are in a process of growing into Christ's image and it happens by the renewing of our minds and by us learning to put off the old man and put on the new man. This is because we see clearly that Christ has redeemed us and we know that our sins are totally dealt with in Christ. Knowing what Christ has accomplished in our salvation gives us many tools to use in strengthening the brethren. Do we have difficulty in ministering to those who struggle with healing because we do not know what Christ has accomplished for us regarding physical healing?

The purpose of this lesson is to learn the truth about healing being included in our salvation as well as areas that are defined in the scriptures as things that would hinder our receiving from the Lord. In learning what things hinder and what things will help us to have open hearts, we will learn how to grow in our own faith as well as learning to minister to the needs of those who struggle with healing. We will do more than say "You need more faith". We will learn to give solid truth and encouragement while directing them to always keep their focus on the master:

Ps 123:1-2

Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.

2 Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us.

- The primary focus is always looking to the Lord.

- When we minister to others with God's word, we give them the tools to be able to see things from God's perspective, we give them hope, we help them to look at their own relationship to the Lord, and we help them to turn their eyes on Jesus, the Master.
- May this lesson bring light and understanding to you and those that you minister to.