

# Why I do not subscribe to the "Faith Healing" Teachings

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At our monthly Family Forum in March (of 2008), I presented to our church family a document presented and approved by our church elders concerning the issue of Biblical doctrine on divine healing. I then gave 10 reasons why I do not endorse/support/ follow the commonly practiced teachings of the "faith healing" teachers and proponents. Any time you do this, it can appear that you are criticizing and/or condemning others for what they believe, teach, or practice. That is not the purpose of this presentation (although I am opposed to some of the things I have witnessed in this movement). My purpose is to share with our church family why I am not moving this direction personally and will not lead our church in this direction as your pastor. Each of us will stand before God and give an account of how we have lived and so I take this matter very seriously. So, let me share with you why I do not endorse or follow what has often been called the "name it/claim it" or "health and wealth" message.

#1 It takes Biblical truth and stretches it beyond what God intended. For example, the oft-quoted passages of Is.53:5 and I Pet 2:24b, "By His stripes, we are healed," are both in the context of our sins, iniquities, and transgressions—not passages on physical health. This doctrine insists that the death of Christ on the cross is God's covenant for physical health—a stretch far beyond what the Bible promises.

#2 This is a one-sided approach to Biblical truth. It is the classic example of proving what you want from certain select Scripture and not the whole counsel of God's Word. It refuses to deal with or ignores passages in the Bible that contradict its "all are healed" message. Instead, they show their "Bible proof" and tell testimonies of those who have received their healing" and refuse (for the most part) to discuss those who were not healed. There is a distinct impression given that a great majority of people who are prayed for are healed...almost all miraculously.

#3 It implies that there is a "lack of faith" or that there is something wrong "somewhere" when someone does not receive their healing. The "problem" is not with God and not with those who are healed. So where is this "problem" that keeps a sincere Christian from being healed? There is only one person left in the equation. Again, this is not always (or often) stated, but that is the implied message. There is a problem and it's not God so...

#4 Totally inadequate explanations of why sincere, faith-filled Christians are not healed—just a moving on to the next sick, ill, or diseased person who needs healing. Is it really enough just to say, "There are no wheelchairs or cancer in heaven, so there shouldn't be any on earth."? If every believer is "entitled" to their healing, explain why so relatively few receive it as they are "promised."

#5 There is an overemphasis on physical healing; which leads to a focus on the temporal, physical aspect of life to the neglect and de-emphasis of the spiritual, eternal nature of the Gospel. The "fight" becomes over healing and health and "beating the devil" who has afflicted us with these diseases and not the soul of man that will live forever. The natural focus of man is on the physical and this feeds that natural desire to the neglect of the spiritual.

#6 It exploits and plays on the emotions and fears of people who are in desperate need for help and healing. A drowning person will grab at anything that floats by and people who are dying or in severe pain will try anything. This "solution" is grabbed in desperation.

#7 This message places those who do not believe the "healing and health promised for the faith-filled" as those with inferior or sub-par faith compared to those who do "believe" this teaching. Either they are ignorant of "deep truths" or "lack the faith" to accept God's Word as true. These are "have nots" or "second class" believers.

#8 This refuses to allow room for honesty, openness, and Ministry to people who desperately need all of these. Instead, there is only one "message" to share—they can be healed if they will believe God's Word. You cannot speak of "illness", "sickness", or "death" because that is a lack of faith and cancels out any healing that could have taken place with "positive confessions." Therefore, people are pressured to "play along" with the faith-speaking crowd or risk being branded as having a lack of Biblical faith.

#9 This brings severe disappointment, pain, and condemnation to those who are "promised healing" but do not receive it. After all, God can't lie so if they are not healed, the "problem" is theirs. They have been told that God WILL heal them. Are those making this promise doing anything to counsel, comfort, and minister to those who "didn't qualify?" I've never seen or heard it if they are. Again, they simply move on to the next "patient" waiting for the "promise."

#10 The attitude of "We know what God's will is for your life," is definitely unbiblical and extraordinarily arrogant. How can anyone just meet someone, know absolutely nothing about them or their background and "promise" to heal them? James 4<sup>13-16</sup> warns against saying that you know what will happen tomorrow to yourself, let alone to others, including strangers. We should always say, "If the Lord wills..." but the "faith healers" say never to say that because it reveals a lack of knowing God's will and believing Him. It is total arrogance to say that we completely understand the will of God for another person. God often uses adversity and other challenges (including sickness) to bring us closer to Himself. We serve and follow a God who is able to work perfectly in an imperfect world.

There are more reasons why I reject the "all healed-all the time-always God's will" message of the hyper-charismatic strain of Christianity. These are just the ones I shared in our Family Forum. Again, I have absolutely no desire to debate/argue this topic. I choose to keep my eyes on the cross of Christ and seek to keep a Christ-centered and God glorifying approach to my faith. To those who see things differently and walk a different path, I pray God will bless and use their life to bring Him great honor and glory.