
THE SECRETS OF HEALING PRAYER

E. Anthony Allen

MB, BS, MDic, MRC Psyche, DM(Psych)

Consultant Psychiatrist

Consultant in Whole Person Health and Church-Based Health Ministries

Prayer is the greatest weapon known to humankind. It is the greatest weapon against all suffering and disease. No endeavour at self-help towards wholeness or wellness will be effective without prayer. No attempts to aid in the complete healing of others will be complete if it is neglected.

I will share with you some "secrets" of healing prayer. I refer to these as "secrets" because they are so often ignored and neglected that when many persons hear of someone being healed by prayer it appears as if some "formula" unknown to us is being used. My hope is that what is shared will no longer be secrets but information known and used by as many persons as possible. All that is shared here applies to *all aspects of one's welfare* including body, mind, spirit, spiritual oppression, relationship and one's social and economic needs. One can also pray for healing of institutions, communities and nations.

Scripture is in itself an agent of healing. The passages indicated in this article will be valuable for your meditation. It is suggested that you read through the article first, and then meditate on the passages in relation to each section. This can be done over a period of time.

THE GREATNESS OF GOD

The God who has created the universe and each of the trillions of cells in our bodies sustains the universe and each subatomic particle of each atom in each cell. Not all the particles of each atom has yet been identified. The scientists are still speculating about what some are like. They use machines called accelerators to try to identify these particles. These machines cost millions of dollars and are miles long! They exist, each for the purpose of analysing one atom at a time! Not all the galaxies or group of planets, in the universe have yet been identified. The particles of the atom and the stars of the universe are held together by forces that scientists do not fully understand

All the cells in our bodies are changed completely in cycles of a few years. What is it that determines that the new cells that come from the food that we eat and the air we breathe will be exactly as the old ones and will group together into the same organs?

What holds everything together into the intricate order of the universe? Is it some impersonal force that just happens to be there? Or is it a "who", a God who knows each of us by name and loves us?^{i ii iii}

Scientific experiments using double blind studies and control groups have established that prayer and faith have healing effects on both body and mind.

Not just science but the combined experience of billions of persons throughout the centuries of human existence. If one takes the trouble to speak to enough persons one will find several who report changes in their lives that came about miraculously by the prayer of themselves and others.

Prayer is not a magical recitation of words designed to give us control of our circumstances. Prayer is not just a healing attitude of mind. It is *a communication with a personal God who wishes to relate to us in love and to restore each of us to wholeness so that we can fully live out the purposes that He has for us.*^{iv v} It is a sharing of need in the context of a relationship with the Great Healer.

THE ATTITUDES OF PRAYER

What are the main attitudes of mind that we need to bring to healing prayer? These are the "three F's". They are as follows:

1. Faith, or a *belief in God's love for us and power to do anything for us that is best.*^{vi vii}
2. Faithfulness, or a *willingness to live as God wishes us to.*^{viii ix}
3. Forgiveness, or a *removal of perpetual resentment and evil intent to those who have wronged us.*^x

A lack of belief, surrender and cleansing of negative intents to those who have contributed to our suffering, are three of the greatest blocks to the effectiveness of healing prayer. God in his wisdom and power can heal a person who may not at the time be exercising faith, faithfulness or forgiveness without that person even praying. Yet this would be His way of bringing this person into these realities of living. Often such healing of God would occur through the prayers of others. Nevertheless such persons would need to follow the principles of effective prayer.

More will be shared about faith below. A refusal to be faithful to live as God wishes us to would be similar to asking a physician to help us while refusing to carry out his instructions! All of God's laws of living, like His laws of nature are for our ultimate good.

THE STEPS OF PRAYER

There are three basic steps to which we can refer as "the ABC of healing prayer" These are as follows:

1. **ASK**

This is as simple as one can get. God is always waiting for us to ask for what we need. He encourages us to ask.^{xi xii} Prayer can be just a simple cry or request to God in the briefest of a moment: "Lord Jesus, heal me (or this person in need) of this ailment. I pray in faith, seeking always seeking to be faithful to you and to forgive those who cause harm" One may need to pray in greater depth or on several occasions in some circumstances, *but the simple basic request opens the door to healing.*

This request can be aided by placing your hand on yourself or on the person you are praying for. Our hands have their own energy of comfort and love given to us by God. Furthermore, through the power of His Spirit they can become channels of God's healing power.

2. **BELIEVE**

Our faith is in a God who can do *all* things, and who *loves* us enough to want to do the best for us. This faith builds an attitude of expectancy that opens the door to God's power and love.^{xiii} Scientists have shown that expectation of cure sets up certain biochemical changes in the body that makes the cure more possible. Positive thinking has been shown to have the power to remove anxiety and depression and to break barriers in how we relate to others.

If faith can cause chemical as well as mental changes, it can also create the conditions in our spirits to surrender to the Spirit of God so that He can bring about supernatural changes in all aspects of our existence.

3. **CONCEIVE**

To conceive means *to develop something in one's mind so that one can bring it into actual existence by one's actions.* It is similar to a woman conceiving a child which first becomes an embryo, then a foetus and then a fully formed baby. The embryo has all of the genetic elements necessary for the full formation of the infant!

Similarly when we conceive in our minds of the full healing, that we have requested, taking place, *all the elements of that healing comes into existence and begin to develop either instantaneously, or gradually into the fully formed reality.*

Conceiving involves the following aspects:

- i. *visualising* the new reality, such as white blood cells eating up cancer cells, the results of a removal of depression, or the transformation of a troubled relationship.^{xiv}
- ii. *thanking* God for bringing the healing into being.^{xv}

iii. *acting out* the reality of the arrived healing.^{xvi}

To act out a reality of Divine healing does not mean that one abandons all other forms of healing such as medicines or counselling. God acts through these pathways to produce healing also. It means that *one will stop acting as though the limitations of the condition or situation are still imposed*. What occurs here is a simple and logical outcome of a combination of one's expectation and God's action. It is not like sympathetic magic as where one sticks a pin into a doll and expects something to happen. It is *accepting the reality of what God himself has done or is doing*. In instantaneous healing one will see or feel the difference and thus it will be easier to *fully exercise the repaired function of body, mind or relationship* that was missing or weakened. In cases of gradual healing one will sense a *beginning of change*. One can then use that beginning as a foundation for *further expectations and exercise of new capacities*. Acting out one's healing is necessary because it is not uncommon for persons to continue in the sick role even after they are benefiting from such as medical care.

It is difficult to adequately describe experience with words. This is the reason why the best way to be able to learn to swim is not to read a manual only, but to also get in the water and move one's arms and legs. The interactive relationship between one's actions and the response of the water leads to a new reality called swimming. Similarly *as one endeavours into a relationship of prayer with God, the interactive relationship between one's actions and the response of God leads to a new reality called healing*.

TAKE PRAYER ACTION NOW

So then, let us get into the "water" of prayer.

- i. Identify your need.
- ii. Exercise faith.
- iii. Commit to faithfulness, and forgiveness.
- iv. **Ask and believe. Conceive** of God's healing into your life by means of visualising the result, thanking God and acting out the reality.

SOME QUESTIONS

In closing, a comment on the questions "when healing does not take place" and "is it God's will?" To put these questions in between one's faith and taking the steps of prayer, is exactly the action of a doubting mind that can prevent healing. Very few persons seek the services of a physician expecting that nothing will happen or doubting the ability or desire of the physician to help them, why should it be any different with God who gives abilities and resources to physicians?

I have already suggested some blockages to healing that come from our own thoughts and actions in terms of a lack of faithfulness and forgiveness. Beyond this, *God in his wisdom at times may withhold a lesser good for a greater one*. To be whole does not necessarily mean to be perfect. It is possible that God can use an ailment or negative situation to allow us to depend on him in a way that we may never have otherwise. Then he can enable us to develop a special strength to deal with that situation.^{xvii} This strength and depth of dependence can then be used to deal with even greater problems that we never expected and that we perhaps may never have been equipped to cope with. *A healing, greater than that for which we originally prayed, and which we most need, can come into being*. When we approach Him with the appropriate attitude, *God only withholds something good from us for something better*.^{xviii}

Finally, God's healing embraces death. For the person of faith and faithfulness who has been made right with God through Christ, there is the resurrection of a new body into a new and never ending life. In this life, there is no sorrow or pain. *It is a life of complete and eternal health or wholeness*.^{xix xx}

NOW IS THE TIME

So with these questions hopefully answered, at least in part, you are encouraged to engage with God in prayer each and every time you face a difficulty or challenge in any aspect of your health and living. We can afford to do this with even greater faith and

expectation than persons give to the best of human physicians. By whatever route it will come, directly or to a greater degree in another context, with whatever speed it will come, immediately or gradually, your healing will come.

HEALING WILL COME

God is ready to hear your prayer any time wherever you are and however hopeless you feel, and in whatever physical or mental pain you are experiencing. So ask Him!

By whatever route, directly or to a greater degree in another context, your healing, of any aspect of self and circumstances, will come. With whatever speed, immediately or gradually, your healing will come.

REFERENCE

Benson, Herbert. (1997) **Timeless Healing: The Power and Biology of Belief**. New York : Fireside.

Scripture References

ⁱ Jeremiah 32: 37

ⁱⁱ Psalm 139

ⁱⁱⁱ Romans 8: 37-39

^{iv} Psalm 103

^v Jeremiah 33: 3

ⁱ Hebrews 11: 1, 6

ⁱⁱ Psalm 84: 11-12

ⁱⁱⁱ James 5: 16b

^{iv} Matthew 6: 24-33

^v Matthew 6: 12-15

ⁱ Matthew 7: 7-11

ⁱⁱ James 5: 16-17

ⁱⁱⁱ James 5: 15

^{iv} Matthew 21: 18-22

^v Philippians 4: 6-7

ⁱ Mark 2: 10-12

ⁱⁱ II Corinthians 12: 1-10

ⁱⁱⁱ Romans 8: 26-28

^{iv} I Corinthians 15: 48-58

^v Revelations 21: 1-7