

Illness and God's Will  
Sickness and Healing in the Life of a Believer

John Sherret

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Randall Hubbard, Ph.D.  
Thesis Chair

---

Garth McGibbon, M.S.  
Committee Member

---

Ed Martin, Ph.D.  
Committee Member

---

Brenda Ayres, Ph.D.  
Honors Director

---

Date

### Abstract

Originally, God never put sickness on people. After the fall, the early history of man as recorded in the Bible further demonstrates Him refraining to use sickness. However, once the law was instituted God began to use sickness as a punishment. In the Old Testament, sickness was always defined as a curse and never a blessing. It was used by God to curse people for disobeying the law. In the New Testament, God was seen healing the multitudes instead of cursing them. Through the atonement of Jesus, believers have been redeemed from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13). Healing has been provided with the forgiveness of sins. There are numerous reasons why people still are not healed but it is not God's Will for them to remain ill.

## Illness and God's Will

In the world today there are a variety of loosely held ideas regarding sicknesses of all kinds and their relationship to God. Unfortunately, some are not motivated to explore these ideas until times of ill health. This situation can result in confusion and perhaps anger towards God during times of hardship. Believers will pray for God's Will to be done while unbelievers will sometimes barter with God. Fortunately, through the Bible, one can be prepared for these situations.

### **A Brief History of Sickness in the Bible**

#### **The Old Testament**

The Old Testament is filled with documentation on sickness and its role in divine plans. In the Old Testament atonement had not yet been made and the blessings of God were not guaranteed. Exodus 23:25 says that sickness would be taken away if one served the Lord. In Deuteronomy 7:12, 15 it says that sickness will be taken away as a result of obeying the Lord. Therefore, elusive sicknesses were likely indications of not serving the Lord. Deuteronomy 28:15-68 lists all the curses that God would place on people as a result of their unwillingness to serve him. Verse 59 states, "Then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance" (Deuteronomy 28:59, King James Version). Sickness and especially diseases that are passed through generations of families were a result of failing to obey and do all that the Lord had commanded. Verse 61 says, "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" (Deuteronomy 28:61). Any disease that had ever been discovered or would be discovered could be used by God

to destroy people for their lack of obedience (Dunn, 2013, p. 38). Verse 61 stated that the purpose of these sicknesses was to destroy and not to bless the recipients. The only foreseeable positive of this type of situation was that a witness would become motivated not to follow in the example of the recipient that was destroyed by the sickness. For example, Deuteronomy 29 talked about the punishment that would come upon Israel if they were ever to forsake the covenant that God had given them:

So that the generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the Lord hath laid upon it; And that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the Lord overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath: Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt. (22-25).

Sickness was the opposite of life and blessing. Deuteronomy 30:19 declares, "...I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." The idea that sickness is a blessing is not supported.

These chapters in Deuteronomy are the clearest exposition of the Bible on the role of sickness. God's purpose for using sickness is to punish and deter sinful behavior (Kelsey, 1973, p. 35). These illnesses were meant to destroy one as God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. For example, in 2 Chronicles 21, King Jehoshaphat passed away

and his son Jehoram succeeded him. Jehoram immediately murdered a minimum of seven people in order to secure his kingdom. He continued to do evil throughout his reign, but the Lord delayed in destroying him. Instead, God sent the prophet Elijah to confront Jehoram. Elijah decreed that Jehoram would have a disease of the bowels. This disease would be a slow and painful process where Jehoram's bowels would slowly fall out of his body. In 2 Chronicles 21 records,

And after all this the Lord smote him in his bowels with an incurable disease. And it came to pass, that in process of time, after the end of two years, his bowels fell out by reason of his sickness: so he died of sore diseases. And his people made no burning for him, like the burning of his fathers. (18-19).

This just punishment killed Jehoram over the span of two years. It did not bless him, but rather it killed him. This instance is consistent with the outline of sickness as presented in Deuteronomy.

Another example of the use of sickness is seen in Isaiah 38. In this instance King Hezekiah was told by God to set his affairs in order because the king would die and not live. Hezekiah weeps, but seeks the Lord. In Isaiah 38 the Lord's response is recorded,

Then came the word of the Lord to Isaiah, saying, Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years. (4-5).

In this instance it was possible to avert the punishment of the Lord by seeking the Lord (Osborn, 1992, p. 224). This example demonstrates that a lack of seeking the Lord was a causative agent in sickness. If Hezekiah had not sought the Lord then he would have died earlier, according to Isaiah 38:1. Interestingly, 2 Kings 18:3-5 says that King Hezekiah

trusted in the Lord more than any other King of Israel. Despite Hezekiah's good works, he still fell short of God's perfect standard and needed God's mercy. In the Old Testament, God did not always grant this mercy which was demonstrated by the child that David and Bathsheba had through an adulterous relationship. In 2 Samuel 12:15-18 David prayed earnestly, but the child died after seven days. This situation was an example of how one person's sin could lead to the death of another person. In 2 Samuel 13:2, Amnon became so lustful towards his sister Tamar that he physically got sick. In 1 Kings 13 the record of Jeroboam, King of Israel is presented:

After this thing Jeroboam returned not from his evil way, but made again of the lowest of the people priests of the high places: whosoever would, he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places. And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth. (33-34).

The next verse in the Bible is 1 Kings 14:1. It says, "At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam fell sick." Living in sin meant that one was not following after God and His commands. In this example, Jeroboam allowed sin into his kingdom and that sin worked to destroy him and his family. One of the immediate consequences was that the king's son Abijah fell sick. In 1 Kings 14 it says,

Arise thou therefore, get thee to thine own house: and when thy feet enter into the city, the child shall die. And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him: for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam. (12-13).

Abijah was the only person in the house of Jeroboam who the Lord considered to have some measure of goodness. As a result he was the only one who was ever recorded to have been buried from the family of Jeroboam. Abijah is said to have possessed “some good” towards the Lord and not “a lot of good.” Perhaps Abijah was himself a very evil son. However, it is interesting that the most righteous person in Jeroboam’s family was the first to be destroyed by God’s judgment. The entire family was eventually wiped out by Baasha King of Israel (Martin, 1964, p. 387). This account is another example of how one person’s sin directly influenced the fate of another person’s life. In His mercy, God still allowed Abijah to be respected in the eyes of all of Israel. This record in 1 Kings 14:1 was a clear illustration how sickness and disease were common punishments for sin. It did not bless the recipients or make them better. It utterly destroyed them.

In 1 Kings 17 the prophet Elijah is introduced in history. After prophesying against King Ahab, God sends Elijah to a gentile widow in the alien land of Zidon. In 1 Kings 17 the widow asks,

And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him. And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son? (17-18).

It is amazing that this widow, despite being a gentile, thought that sin would have been the ultimate reason for her son’s death. Her response suggests that God’s commandments to the Jews had propagated to the point that the gentiles were well aware of the His requirements or at least had access or exposure to the Old Testament Law. This widow



did not call God unjust for the death of her son. Instead, she merely asked Elijah if he had come to her house to remind her that she was a sinner through the illness of her son.

In 2 Kings 1 Ahaziah becomes sick and instructs his servants to inquire of a foreign god to determine the fate of this illness. Elijah intercepts the messengers and tells them,

But the angel of the Lord said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to enquire of Baalzebub the God of Ekron? Now therefore thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. And Elijah departed. (2 Kings 1:3-4)

In verse 17 it says that King Ahaziah died according to the word of the Lord that Elijah had spoken. This sickness did not bless Ahaziah or increase his virtue. It was a just punishment and it ended his life. In 2 Kings 8:7 the king of Syria is ill and he instructs his servants to ask Elisha if he will recover or not. Elisha informs him that he will surely recover although it will not matter because he will be murdered.

In Numbers 12, Miriam and Aaron challenge Moses' leadership and Miriam becomes cursed with leprosy. Moses prays on her behalf and she recovers from the leprosy. In Exodus 12, all of Egypt's firstborn are killed because of Pharaoh's hardened heart.

In Numbers 25, there were 24,000 deaths by plague among the Israelites because some of the men were fornicating and committing idolatry with foreign women. One of the guilty subjects, in total defiance, brought one of the women into his tent in clear view of all the people who were mourning because of the plague. He and the woman were

killed, which resulted in the plague being removed from Israel. Numbers 31:16 reveals that the Midianities enticed the Israelites to commit these sins so that they would suffer a plague. The Midianities had used these sins as an act of war against the Israelites.

There are many more demonstrations of sickness being a curse of the law. In all these instances, the ailments were defined as curses and not blessings. In review the Old Testament warns,

But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee.

(Deuteronomy 28:15).

Logically, one may conclude that sickness as a form of punishment was always a direct result of one's personal sins. However, this conclusion would be incomplete because there are biblical examples of people who were serving the Lord wholeheartedly yet they still had sicknesses. The first example is Job. The first words out of the book of Job say, "In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil" (Job 1:1, New International Version). Job loved his children. He demonstrated this love by continually offering sacrifices on their behalf. Despite his lifestyle, Job received one of the harshest doses of supposed punishment. The Lord's evaluation of Job's situation is recorded,

And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. (Job 2:3, King James Version)

The Lord said that Job was being destroyed and not blessed without cause. According to the Lord, Job, while still a sinner in need of a Savior, did not commit a specific sin that warranted this suffering. Job's friends on the other hand insisted that Job had sinned terribly. Due to the comments of Job's friends, the Lord got mad and nearly wiped them out in Job 42. Therefore, it is inaccurate to condemn an individual by stating that their personal sins have caused their diseases. While personal sin may be a cause it is not always to blame.

In John 9, Jesus' disciples demanded to know whose sins had caused the blind man to be born blind. They wanted to know if it was the blind man or his parents who were to blame. To their surprise Jesus said that it was not the sins of either party. This instance is yet another example where personal sins were not the causative agent of the ailment. In Acts 10:38 the source is revealed. It says, "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" (Acts 10:38). The blind man was oppressed of the devil and it was a good thing for God to heal him. God did not oppress this man for the purpose of healing him later through Jesus.

Luke 1 illustrates another powerful example to show that personal sins are not always the causative agent behind an ailment. In Luke 1 Zacharias and Elizabeth are introduced. They are the parents of John the Baptist who Jesus said was the greatest man who had ever lived. In verse 6-7 it says, "And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years" (Luke 1:6-7). In Deuteronomy 7:14 God had promised that if one would walk in the

commandments of the Lord then that individual would not be sterile or barren. Luke 1 states that they were both righteous, walking in the commandments and were blameless. It is likely that their condition of barrenness was a major source of confusion for the couple. It is also likely that they were condemned or judged by their neighbors and peers. These problems were voiced by Elizabeth who said in verse 25, "Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men" (Luke 1:25). As stated previously, Jesus mentioned in Matthew 11:11 that their son was the greatest man who had ever lived. The life of this family powerfully demonstrates that personal sins were not always the cause of personal ailments. Therefore, it is wrong to always conclude that an individual is sick because of their unfaithfulness to God.

In review of the Old Testament or prior to Jesus, sickness was always defined as a curse and not a blessing. It was a punishment for disobeying God. Out of the recorded instances, most of those who were punished were killed. It did not make them better or richer in virtue. Even in the book of Job, God said that Satan was moving Him to destroy Job without cause. While sin was a major causative agent of sickness, it was not always the personal sins of an individual or the individual's family that were to blame. The people who overcame these curses were in every instance those who continued to rely on God. Three examples would be Job, King Hezekiah and Naaman the leper of Syria. While it is possible that many people were healed in the Old Testament by relying on God, the biblical record of these instances is sparse.

## **The New Testament**

In the New Testament history, the record of miraculous healings is dense compared to the Old Testament. There are about fourteen different times in the Gospels that Jesus healed all who were present. Here are three examples:

But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all. (Matthew 12:15)

When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick. (Matthew 8:16)

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them. (Matthew 4:23-24)

Jesus healed everyone and all types of sicknesses. The other instances where Jesus healed all who were present are seen in Matthew 9:35, Matthew 14:14, Matthew 14:34-36, Matthew 15:30-31, Matthew 19:2, Matthew 21:14, Mark 6:56, Luke 4:40, Luke 6:17-19, Luke 9:11 and Luke 17:12-17. There are forty-seven different instances where Jesus healed one or two people at a time. These instances are found in Matthew 8:1-4, 8:5-13, 8:14-15, 8:28-34, 9:1-8, 9:20-33, 12:10-13, 12:22-23, 15:21-28, 17:14-18, 20:30-34; Mark 1:21-31, 1:40-45, 2:1-12, 3:1-5, 5:1-20, 5:25-43, 7:24-37, 8:22-26, 9:14-29, 10:46-52; Luke 4:33-39, 5:12-15, 5:17-26, 6:6-10, 7:1-17, 8:27-39, 8:43-56, 9:37-42,

11:14, 13:11-17, 14:1-5, 18:35-43, 22:51; John 4:46-54, 5:2-15, 9:6-7 and 11:43-44. Out of all sixty-one instances Jesus is never recorded as refusing to heal anyone. He is also never recorded as giving sickness to anyone including his own disciples. The only instance of Jesus' power being limited is found in Mark's gospel which says, "And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching" (Mark 6:5-6). This same instance is recorded in Matthew's gospel which says, "And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief" (Matthew 13:58). All of the Bible translations say that Jesus was unable to perform miracles in this instance because of the unbelief of the people. None of the translations declare that Jesus refused to heal, but rather that He could not perform the miracles. This instance does not challenge the omnipotence of God, but rather demonstrates that these people did not benefit from Jesus because of their unbelief. Therefore, the biblical history of the New Testament never illustrates Jesus as refusing to heal. Jesus only refused to perform miracles when Herod asked for a magical demonstration (Straton, 1950, p. 26). Jesus even commanded his disciples to preach the gospel and heal the sick in the same breath. The record says, "And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:7-8). In Luke 10 a similar command is also recorded. In Matthew 17 the disciples encountered a situation where they were unable to heal a demon possessed boy. When Jesus hears of their failure, his immediate response is recorded in verse 17 which says, "Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to

me” (Matthew 17:17). Jesus was displeased over the news that this boy had not yet been healed. The book of Acts is full of miraculous healings by Jesus’ disciples. One example includes,

And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people;...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. 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 everyone. (Acts 5:12, 15-16)

In Acts 9 Peter heals a man named Aeneas by the power of God:

And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy. And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately. (33-34)

Immediately after, another disciple who is referred to as Tabitha or Dorcas becomes sick and dies. Peter goes to the body and says, “Tabitha, arise,” and Tabitha is raised from the dead. In the verses that follow it is revealed that this miracle caused many people around the region to believe on the Lord. In Acts 19:12, it is recorded that handkerchiefs and aprons that came in contact with Paul were able to heal those who touched those items. In Acts 28:8, Paul lays hands on a man, prays and heals him. In another instance, a man falls asleep in one of Paul’s meetings, causing him to fall out of a window to his death. Instead of being offended for sleeping during his sermon, Paul raises the man from the dead. In addition, examples of abuse by commoners are recorded. In Acts 19:13, a group of exorcists were overcome by a demon when they tried to use Jesus’ name to cast out

devils. In Acts 8:18, a man named Simon tried to buy the power of God from Paul. Paul rebukes the man by saying that God's power cannot be bought. Paul sternly tells the man to repent for such a thought.

### **Does God Have a Split Personality?**

According to the biblical history it may appear that God had a split personality. In the Old Testament history He punished people with sickness whereas in the New Testament history He never refused to heal anyone. To conclude that God has a split personality is incorrect. It was always and still is God's will to bless humanity. In Genesis, mankind was created on the final day of work which was the sixth day which meant that Adam and Eve did not earn their provisions in the Garden of Eden. These blessings were given to them by grace. They were given the finished work of creation just as the believer today is given the finished work of the cross. When sin entered the world, God was merciful to Adam and Eve. Instead of going into great detail to inform them of the future effects of sin, God made clothing for them because they felt ashamed of their nakedness. God was also merciful to Cain, the first murderer. He promised Cain supernatural protection. In Genesis it says, "And the Lord said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him" (Genesis 4:15). God always had His heart towards humanity, but people began to misinterpret His leniency as indifference or approval for sin. People began to believe that sin was not an issue. They began to compare themselves to each other to determine their own level of righteousness. A perfect example of this is Lamech, Cain's great great grandson. Lamech claimed to have



killed a man in retaliation. In comparison to Cain, Lamech felt his situation was more justified because he had not killed in cold blood. Lamech told his wives,

Lamech said to his wives, Adah and Zillah, listen to me; wives of Lamech, hear my words. I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for injuring me. If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech seventy-seven times.” (Genesis 4:23-24, New International Version)

God never said He would avenge Lamech. It was Lamech who compared himself to Cain and believed that God owed him protection. This attitude of Lamech reflected how people began to compare themselves to others. In 2 Corinthians 10:12, it states that this kind of comparison is unwise. People began to believe that sin was not an issue. Others had sinned and gotten away with it. Nobody had been punished. In fact it almost appeared advantageous to live in sin. As a result, sin began to multiply and few were recognizing the need for a Savior. Sin quickly progressed to the point that 99.9% of the human race was totally corrupted:

And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

(Genesis 6:5-6, King James Version)

All of mankind's thoughts were only evil and it grieved God. In an effort to save the course of mankind, God conducted emergency surgery to amputate the cancerous population that was beyond saving (Whitcomb and Morris, 2003). The same type of surgery was conducted again when Sodom and Gomorrah became just as corrupt. In order to prevent such situations from arising again, God had to show mankind that sin

was an issue. He needed to help them realize their desperate need for a Savior which He did by instituting the Old Testament Law. In the book of Galatians it says,

Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made... Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

(Galatians 3:19, 24)

Suddenly, people realized the perfection that God demanded. There was no more room for the self-righteousness that Lamech had demonstrated. God began to hold people accountable and people began to abstain from sinful lifestyles out of fear. People were punished with devices such as sickness. Fortunately, this policy prevented sin from spreading as rapidly as it had before.

When Jesus entered the world, God's love towards humanity was further demonstrated in a consistent manner. In Hebrews 1:3 it says,

Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

This verse declares that Jesus was an express image or perfect representation of God. The way that Jesus treated people is the way that He has always longed to relate to mankind. In John 10:10 it says, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." These verses demonstrate God's unchanging love towards humanity and dispel any idea of a split personality. When He died on the cross He declared that it is finished. The temple veil tore in two illustrating that access to God was now open. Anyone who puts total faith

and commitment in what Jesus accomplished has unrestricted access to a relationship with God. In Heaven, this relationship will continue without any of the hindering effects of sin.

### **The Current Status of Sickness**

When God instituted the Old Testament Law, sickness was clearly stated to be a curse. It was designated to be given to those who did not obey God and who were not careful to do all the commands and decrees of the law. It was never referred to as a blessing in disguise. In Deuteronomy 27:26 it declares, "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen." All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Everyone has broken the law of God and is therefore cursed. By justice, everyone deserves sicknesses. Fortunately, God put mankind's punishment on His own son. Through this sacrifice it is possible to escape the punishing effects of sickness. There is clear evidence of this sacrifice being completed. First, in Deuteronomy 21 it tells,

And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance. (22-23)

Thankfully, in Galatians, Paul wrote this verse saying, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Galatians 3:13). These verses prove that the curses of the law, which include sickness according to Deuteronomy 28, have been cancelled by Christ's sacrifice.

Through His sacrifice, justice has been satisfied and the need to be punished by sickness no longer exists. Therefore, in light of the biblical history, it is an insult to Christ to affirm that God is still using sickness on His own children (Hagin, 2002, p. 192). Jesus satisfied the wrath of God and there is no requirement on one's part to add to His sacrifice through penance. This theme of grace is recurrent throughout the life of Jesus. In Isaiah 53 it says,

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. (4-5)

This verse was fulfilled in Matthew 8 when Jesus healed Peter's mother and all the demon possessed and sick people of Capernaum. In Matthew 8:17 it says, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." In 1 Peter 2:24 it says, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." God has already provided healing through His atonement. Therefore, God is no longer using sickness to punish believers because He Himself satisfied justice by putting mankind's sins upon Jesus.

It is God's will for everyone to be healed. In 3 John 1:2 it says, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." There are many reasons why this blessing does not come to pass in the lives of many. However, it was originally and still is today God's Will for mankind to be healthy instead of diseased.

In the writing of the Bible, there is further evidence of the concept that Jesus' sacrifice saved mankind from the curse of the law. This evidence has to do with the actual Greek words that were translated. In Romans 10:9 it says, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." The word that was translated "saved" is the Greek word, "sozo." According to Strong's concordance the Greek word of sozo means to save, to deliver or protect, to heal, to preserve, to save, to do well, to be whole or to make whole (Strong, 1970, p. G70). This word sozo was translated "saved" in Matthew 1:21 which says, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins." These two verses clearly demonstrate that the Greek word of "sozo" was referring to salvation. However, in Matthew 9:21-22 the word "sozo" was also used to refer to the healing of a woman who suffered from a blood disease for twelve years. The word of "sozo" was translated as "whole." It reads,

For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be **whole**. But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee **whole**. And the woman was made **whole** from that hour. (Matthew 9:21-22)

In Mark 5:23, the word "sozo" was again translated as "healed." It says, "And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be **healed**; and she shall live" (Mark 5:23). These verses and many others conclusively show that in the writing of the Bible, the word "sozo" was used interchangeably to refer to both spiritual and physical healing. Physical healing is just as much a part of Christ's atonement as is the forgiveness of sins. An

example of this connection is seen in Mark 2 where Jesus forgives a crippled man's sins and then immediately heals him. The healing of the body is a blessing and not a curse. Jesus himself equated sickness as an evil device meant to destroy. This illustration is seen in Mark 3:4, when the word *sozo* was used to refer to the physical restoration of a man who had a withered hand. It states, "And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to **save** life, or to kill? But they held their peace" (Mark 3:4). The biblical history consistently shows that it was always God's will for mankind to live in health and not sickness. The life of Jesus and the writing of the Bible show that salvation includes healing from sickness.

In Mark 3:4 Jesus equated good with saving life and evil with killing. Today, religion switches these around to where healings are of the devil and God torturing His own children is good. In Acts 4 it writes,

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole. (8-9)

Peter had healed a man which had caused the religious elders to draw Peter into court. In court, Peter boldly declared, being absolutely filled with the Holy Ghost, that this healing was a good deed. If Peter, being filled with the Holy Ghost, declared that healing was a good deed then one should never hold the opposite viewpoint that being sick is God inspired.

Sickness was a plague that God used to judge sin before He Himself paid the penalty. The writing of the Bible and the life of Jesus show that it is not God's Will for

one to be sick. The current status of sickness is that it is obsolete in light of Jesus' atoning sacrifice.

## **Objections**

### **What about Paul's Thorn in the Flesh?**

In 2 Corinthians 12 Paul introduced his "thorn in the flesh" which has been the topic of much previous discussion. One interpretation is that Paul's "thorn" was a sickness that God chose not to heal (Piper and Taylor, 2006). Various interpretations believe that this "thorn" was an eye disease, a form of epilepsy or a susceptibility to malaria (Atkinson, 2011, p. 12). The reasoning is that if the Apostle Paul was not healed then how can anyone expect to be healed?

The reason that many believe that Paul's "thorn in the flesh" was a sickness is because of the use of the word "infirmity" in the English language. In 2 Corinthians 12:5 it testifies, "Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities." In the English dictionary, an infirmity is referred to as a physical ailment. However, the definition of "infirmity" is not limited to the describing of a physical ailment. The Greek word that was translated as "infirmities" is the word of "astheneia" (Strong, 1970, p. 514). In Romans 8:26, the same word "astheneia" was also translated to the English word "infirmities". It says, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26). In the context of Romans 8:26, the Greek word of "astheneia" was referring to a weakness that came as a result of not knowing how to pray. This example demonstrates that the definition of "infirmity" is not limited to physical sickness (Obsorn, 1992, p. 205).

In the context of 2 Corinthians 12, the Greek word of “astheneia” was referring to the hardships and persecutions that Paul experienced as an Apostle. The context for this interpretation comes from 2 Corinthians 11 where Paul defined an infirmity. It is important to note that it was the Bible translators who subdivided the Bible into chapters and verses. When Paul originally wrote 2 Corinthians, it was not subdivided in the way that it is today. In 2 Corinthians 11:23-29 Paul talks about the hardships of being a minister of the Gospel. He was beaten with rods and was even stoned. He was shipwrecked multiple times. His travels were dangerous as he was in constant danger from robbers, false Christians and many other perils. On top of all his problems was the daily care of the churches. In verse 30, Paul proclaims that he will glory in these infirmities. Therefore, Paul’s use of the word “infirmities” eight verses later is more likely to be referring to the hardships of the ministry rather than a physical ailment.

The thorn in the flesh was literal persecution. In the Old Testament, a thorn in the flesh was commonly used to refer to enemies that the Israelites had failed to drive out of the Promised Land. In Numbers 33 it warns,

“But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and **thorns in your sides**, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell.”  
(55)

The Apostle Paul had extensive knowledge in the Old Testament which is demonstrated by his numerous quotations from the Old Testament. Paul’s use of the word “thorn in the flesh” would have been alluding to these Old Testament Scriptures rather than a sickness. It would have been problematic to refer to sickness as a “thorn in the flesh” due to the



risk of allusion. In Joshua 23 the terminology of this word is used again to refer to Gentile nations:

Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you: Know for a certainty that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and **thorns in your eyes**, until ye perish from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you. (12-13)

The Israelites were commanded to totally destroy these nations, otherwise the survivors would become thorns to them. Again in Judges 2 this same terminology is used:

And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this? Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as **thorns in your sides**, and their Gods shall be a snare unto you. (2-3)

In all of these instances of the Old Testament usage, a thorn in the flesh was never used to refer to a physical sickness. In every instance, the terminology refers to people who were against the nation of Israel. Therefore, in combining the contexts of the 2 Corinthians' use of "infirmities" and "thorn in the flesh," Paul could not have been referring to a physical sickness. Instead he was describing the hardships of being an Apostle that came about by the hand of people who were against the Gospel.

Paul was targeted with a thorn in the flesh to make the Gospel seem less attractive. Firstly, he was given this thorn because of the abundance of revelations that he had received from God. For example, Paul had enough revelation from God to write 13

of 27 books in the New Testament (Quarles, 2014, p. 1). In Acts 19, he was able to heal people by touching handkerchiefs and distributing them to the sick. He rightly rebuked the disciple Peter, whom Jesus said was the rock of the church, for only preaching to the Jews. In 2 Peter 3:16, Paul's writings were referred to as Scripture in his lifetime. Until one receives a similar amount of revelation knowledge from God, one cannot claim to be experiencing Paul's thorn in the flesh (Osborn, 1992, p. 204). Secondly, this thorn was given to him by Satan and not God. In 2 Corinthians 12:7 it says, "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure." Thirdly, the thorn was given to keep Paul from being exalted above measure. Self-exaltation is demonic, but there are godly forms of exaltation. For example, 1 Peter 5:6 commands, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." Psalm 37:34 and Matthew 23:12 also establish that those who humble themselves will be exalted while those who try to exalt themselves will be abased. Pride or self-exaltation always goes before a fall (Proverbs 16:18). A fall does not go before pride. Paul was not given this problem by Satan to prevent him from possibly becoming prideful in the future. In Joshua 3:7 and Joshua 4:14, the Lord told His servant Joshua that He would exalt him in the eyes of Israel so that they would follow him. In the context of the Apostle Paul, he was demonstrating the Gospel so powerfully that Satan stirred up additional persecution to make Paul's message less attractive. It was meant to associate Paul's success with intense hardship. In Mark 4:17 it says, "And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended." By stirring up intense persecution,

Satan hoped to make people think twice before deciding to become a disciple after Paul. If God had delivered Paul from this thorn by wiping out all his persecutors then none of his critics would have had a chance to hear the Gospel. Instead, God told Paul to find strength in His power.

There are three mentions in the New Testament of the Apostles or their disciples getting sick. The first instance is in Galatians 4 where Paul mentions a physical ailment that the Galatians witnessed when he first preached to them:

Ye know how through **infirmity of the flesh** I preached the gospel unto you at the first. 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. 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. (13-15).

Some have believed that this “infirmity of the flesh” is referring to a chronic disease of the eyes that Paul never overcame. A more probable interpretation is that Paul was referring to the physical effects of the stoning he received as recorded in Acts 14. In Acts 14 Paul was stoned in the city of Lystra to the point that his executioners believed him to be dead. After his executioners dragged his body out of the city, he rose up and walked 60 miles to a town called Derbe (Meinardus, 1979, p. 42). To have traveled this distance after being stoned so severely suggests that Paul was resurrected or miraculously healed. The significant fact is that Lystra and Derbe were both settlements in the region of Galatia (Meinardus, 1979, p. 35). These would have been the places containing the audience that Paul was writing to through the book of Galatians. Paul also stated that it was “at the first” that he preached with this infirmity of the flesh. This implies that Paul

recovered from the stoning he received at the city of Lystra. It was not a chronic problem that he never overcame.

A second example of a disciple becoming sick was mentioned in 1 Timothy 5:23. Paul simply instructs Timothy to avoid water and to use a little wine for his stomach and infirmities. One interpretation is that Timothy was always sick and therefore God does not heal people today. Another interpretation is that Paul advised Timothy to refrain from only drinking water which could have been contaminated. Timothy's actions of drinking contaminated water were causing him physical ailments. Paul merely told him to eliminate the source of his ailment.

A third example of a disciple getting sick is recorded in 2 Timothy 4:20. In this instance, a disciple named Trophimus got sick. Critics reason that if one of Paul's disciples got sick then healing must not be for everyone. However, in the same way that one cannot be responsible for the salvation of another, so one cannot be responsible for the healing of another. In Mark 6:5-6, the sinless son of God could not heal everyone because of their unbelief. People were not automatically saved or healed because they were associated with Jesus. They had to display some trust in His ability to meet their needs. In the same way, Trophimus could not be guaranteed salvation or healing because of his association with Paul. Trophimus had to rely on God's grace just the same as anyone else. The Scriptures do not reveal if Trophimus stayed sick or was healed. He is mentioned again twice in Scripture in Acts 20:4 and Acts 21:29.

God no longer places sickness on believers. He does not use it for correction in the life of a believer. Instead He uses His word to correct His children. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17 Paul writes, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for

doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” According to this Scripture, the Word of God is sufficient to make the men of God perfect and thoroughly furnished unto all good works. The use of sickness is obsolete. In 2 Corinthians 5:14 Paul said it was the love of Christ that motivated him to neglect himself for the sake of others. In Romans 2:4 it says that the goodness of God brings men to repentance. Therefore, the Bible and the goodness and love of Christ are sufficient to motivate an individual to serve God. Sickness is no longer needed as a deterrent against sin in the life of a believer.

### **Why Isn't Everyone Healed?**

If it is always God's will for one to be healed then why does the human race still experience sickness? Firstly, Jesus is not the variable. According to Hebrews 13:8, Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. He has always been displaying His affection for mankind, the greatest of which was displayed on the cross. In John 5:19 Jesus said that He could do only the works that He saw His father doing. Out of all the works that Jesus did, He never killed anyone, but instead healed as many people as He could. Therefore, God cannot be responsible for the tragedies that are afflicting believers today.

The natural consequences of living in a fallen world foster sickness and tragedy. Since the introduction of sin, certain facts such as micro-pathogens have become a reality. Until one reaches Heaven, such problems, will still be a risk factor inherent with living in a fallen world. In the Old Testament, the sins of people were sometimes the cause of their sicknesses. The same is true in the current era. For example, if someone lives a sexually immoral lifestyle and contracts a sexually transmitted disease, then it is their lifestyle of sin that caused the ailment. If that person had been exalting God's

wisdom in their choices then they would never have contracted that disease. In Romans 6 it reads,

What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? (15-16)

If people do not yield themselves to God when He draws them by the Holy Spirit then their sins will start producing death in their lives. As illustrated in Deuteronomy 30:19, God does not want people to choose death, but many are choosing it. For example, in 2 Peter 3:9 God declared that He is not willing that any should perish in Hell. Yet in Matthew 7:13 Jesus said that many would enter the broad gate unto destruction despite His command to enter through the narrow gate. Finally, certain sicknesses can be the result of direct attacks from Satan. In such cases Christians are instructed to submit to God and resist the devil. In James 4:7 it commands, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." It is wrong to ask God to do what He instructed one to do (Wommack, 2009, p.151). If one does not resist the devil then one will not be healed.

Unbelief is the major reason everyone does not experience perfect health. Sin and one's experiences in a fallen world tends to cultivate unbelief or doubt in God's ability. It is important to note that faith and unbelief are not mutually exclusive forces. The presence of one force does not automatically exclude the presence of the other. For example, in Mark 9 a man brings Jesus his demon possessed son. He asks Jesus to help the child if He has any power to do so. Jesus responds by placing responsibility back onto

the man. Jesus says that if the man could believe then all things would be possible. In verse 24 the man responds, "And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24). The man had faith which is demonstrated by his willingness to seek help from Jesus and His disciples. Despite having this faith, the man asked Jesus to help counter his unbelief. Jesus did not rebuke the man, but instead healed his son. Mark 5:36 records, "As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, **only** believe." In Mark 11:23 Jesus says, "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...**" (Mark 11:23). According to these verses it is possible to have faith and unbelief at the same moment. The solution is not only to exercise faith, but also to simultaneously minimize unbelief. For example, in Luke 17:5 the disciples asked Jesus to increase their faith. Jesus immediately responded by saying that all they need is just a little bit of faith to accomplish great things for God. Continuing, the same story of Mark 9:24 is recorded in Matthew 17 but with greater detail. In this account, the disciples ask Jesus why they were unable to cast the demon out of the child. In Matthew 17 it states,

Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? 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. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting. (19-21)

Again, Jesus told them that they did not need a great faith but rather a pure faith that was not countered by unbelief. A tiny faith that was not countered by unbelief would be enough to move mountains. They needed a pure faith. When the disciples attempted to heal this boy, it is likely that they saw a manifestation of this demon. It is likely that their five senses immediately told them that the boy had not been cured. While the disciples had faith to cure the boy, they were more dominated by what they saw. What they witnessed naturally fostered unbelief which short circuited their faith. Jesus said in verse 21 that this kind of unbelief is only countered by training one's self through prayer and fasting. Unbelief is a dangerous concept. In Hebrews 3:7-19 it declares that the nation of Israel failed to enter the Promise Land at first because of unbelief. In Hebrews 4:1, Christians are commanded not to fall short of God's best as the Israelites did through their unbelief. The consecutive verses say, "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" (Hebrews 3:19 and Hebrews 4:1).

There are several reasons why everyone is not healed the most general of which is unbelief. However, none of these reasons are due to God withholding His power. Sin is a force which can lead people to live dangerous lifestyles that culture sickness. However, it is not always a sinful lifestyle that cultures sickness. Sometimes believers are attacked by Satan and lack the understanding to resist him. As a result they are unable to be healed. Unbelief, rather than a lack of faith, is also a major reason why everyone fails to be healed. The unbelievers do not believe in God. The believers either do not know that God heals or they have experienced failure in the past that has discouraged them. As time continues there will always be people who will not be able to receive healing from God.



### **The Laws of Faith**

Everything in the universe is governed by law. Cellular reactions are governed by the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> laws of thermodynamics. Electricity and gravity are governed by physical laws. Planetary motions are governed by laws. These laws are so constant that the position of a constellation in the night sky can be predicted decades in advance. As mankind has discovered these laws, civilizations have been able to reap the benefits. For example, electricity has been around since the creation of the universe. However, it was not until recently in history that mankind has been able to harness the power of electricity. These laws in the natural world reflect how the spiritual world is also governed by law. In Romans 3:27 Paul makes mention of a constancy in the spiritual realm when he says, "...but by the law of faith." Regarding healing, there are a multitude of spiritual laws that govern how the power of God is distributed. All of these laws are recorded within the Bible. Faith is not a pseudoscience that sometimes works and at other times does not work for no apparent reason. It is governed through an indiscriminate system called the law of faith. It is not possible to by-pass these laws through ignorance or good intentions. Through cooperation with these laws it is possible to become a better witness for Christ.

There are many laws of faith and a lifetime of study is required to discover them. One of the many laws is that the Word of God must be preached. In Romans 10:17 it explains, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." If the Word of God is absent then faith will be absent in the people that desperately need God to heal them. Once the word is preached the recipients must humble themselves by mixing the Word with faith. In Hebrews 4:2 it is revealed that the nation of Israel failed to do this

step which resulted in 40 years in the wilderness. Therefore, one must study the Scriptures to discover what God has already provided through His grace.

A second law is to understand how much God loves his people. In Galatians 5:6 it informs, "...but faith which worketh by love." Faith works by love and not selfishness. If a person were ever to understand how much God truly loves him or her then it would quicken that individual's faith. The love of God is something that cannot be counterfeited. It is something that can only be consistently experienced through a relationship with God. Individuals who do not love God will short-circuit their own faith because they are trying to get healed apart from a relationship with God. They are using God like a prescription pill.

A third law is to avoid strife and envy. In James 3:16 it says, "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." Strife and envy can be the root of sickness in certain situations. In fact, research has revealed that resentment and bitterness are two of the most common attitudes associated with negative health (Hickey, 1993, p. 77). If the person is cured then the problem will return if the root cause of strife and envy has not been removed. For example, in Mark 11 Jesus spoke to a fig tree and commanded it to die. When He was explaining to His disciples how this miracle took place He instructed them in verse 25 by saying, "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any..." (Mark 11:25). If an individual is praying for healing but is harboring bitterness, unforgiveness, strife or envy then it is doubtful that he or she will get healed. They may sincerely love God, but the law of faith does not respond to sincerity. It works by obeying the Word of God (Hayes, 1981, p. 15).

A fourth law is to speak life with one's mouth. The Bible is abundant with Scripture commanding prudent use of words. In Proverbs 18:21 it reveals, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof." The word picture illustrated here is that every word that an individual speaks is like a seed. This seed will either produce life or death and not anything in between. In Psalm 34 it tells, "What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile (12-13)." This truth is repeated in 1 Peter 3 which says, "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile (10)." The humanistic worldview would discredit these biblical claims as childish. If an individual is begging God for healing but is speaking, "I know God says that, but my pain says this," then they are cooperating with a spiritual law that will produce death in their life. The old saying of, "Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me," is false according to these scriptures. Words are so important that Jesus said, "... That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matthew 12:36). One can use words to produce death in themselves and others. One can also use words to produce life in themselves and others.

A fifth law is to actively resist the sickness. In James 4:7, Christians are commanded to resist the devil rather than ask God to resist the devil for them. God will not do what He told Christians to do (Wommack, 2009, p.151). If people would resist sickness in the same manner that they resist sin then fewer would be overcome by ailments.

### **Conclusion**

It is always God's Will for one to be healed. Prior to the sacrifice of Jesus, sickness was used as a means of punishment for breaking God's law. However, the atonement of Jesus redeemed Christians from this punishment meaning that God is no longer the source of sickness in the life of a believer. Despite this reception, people are falling short of divine health in their lives because of unbelief, sin, deception and conformity to the world's way of thinking. The degree to which one renews one's mind is the degree to which one will prove the Will of God. Romans 12:2 commands, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." God loved the whole world so much that He sent His own son to die. In honor of that one should aim to be as productive as possible in this life at seeking relationship with Christ while accomplishing whatever He has called one to do. All believers should dedicate themselves to discovering more of the laws of faith in order to prevent their ministries from being shortened through the effects of sickness. For example, in Deuteronomy 34 Moses was 120 and was still able to climb up mountains and fulfill the call of God for his life. If Moses was able to rely on God that closely for strength then believers today should aim for no less of a standard considering now that Jesus has purchased redemption. If one is not martyred then this should be the goal until one reaches a maximum age or the Lord returns. The Apostle Paul says, "I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body" (Philippians 1:23-24, New International Version). A few extra

years spent ministering on the Earth is nothing in comparison to the length of eternity, but it could mean all the difference for someone else.

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