

FRONTLINE

Richard Mayhew

Foreword by John MacArthur

THE HEALING PROMISE

Is it always God's will to heal?

Features Joni Eareckson Tada

*The
Healing
Promise*

Richard Mayhew

Mentor

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Foreword

Everybody dies. Everybody gets sick. Everybody has been injured. Avoiding these pirates of peace and pleasure is a lifelong enterprise for everybody. Because they mean pain, suffering, debilitation, and separation, we all pursue triumph over them. Eliminating death, sickness, and injury from life would bring bliss! No disease, no disaster, and no death would mean no fear, no anxiety, no dread. A life like that would be Utopian. People would do anything and pay anything for it.

If someone had the power to heal all disease, eliminate all injury, and end all death, the world would surely make that person the object of their love and adoration. Right? Wrong. Jesus had the power and demonstrated it, but His enemies injured Him and then killed Him. Amazingly, they wounded and murdered the One who came to end their pain and death forever! Such is the irrational selfishness of man.

Jesus brought the healing promise of God, and it was clear to see that He could fulfill it. He banished disease from Palestine. The prospect of physical healing drew people to Him and His apostles by the thousands. And they were not disappointed, for they were healed. This massive demonstration of both the power of God over the effect of sin and the compassion of God for the experience of suffering clarified the reality that God was offering healing to those who came to Him. Just what that healing gift involves, both now and in eternity, is the purpose of this important and encouraging book.

You are highly privileged to read this treasure and come away with the richness of God's healing promise.

John MacArthur
Pastor-Teacher
Grace Community Church
Sun Valley, California

Preface

Twenty years have passed since healing advocate Hobart Freeman prompted my first interest in this subject while I attended seminary in north-central Indiana. That led eventually to my writing *Divine Healing Today* in the early 1980's. Since 1985, new books on healing have appeared at an unprecedented pace, accompanied by a fresh generation of people promoting healing ministries. The time has now arrived for me to update and significantly expand my material in this new book—*The Healing Promise*.

I am not writing to debunk every healer on the scene. Were that my intent, the book would be quickly outdated, since a new group will undoubtedly arise before long. Rather, I intend to develop a biblical model of healing by which we can test anyone who claims to heal—past, present, and future. With this approach we can minister biblical truth and protect Christians from the pain and anguish that come as a result of unbiblical teaching and practice. At the same time we can positively and correctly understand God's healing promises in Scripture.

It is not my desire to be bombastic or sarcastic, nor to treat other believers ungraciously. But I must interact with the biblical and contemporary issues in the teachings and writings of those leaders whose ministries have a high degree of impact on people today. The greater good of protecting the church of Jesus Christ from painful error requires the lesser risk of offending others unintentionally in our pursuit of truth.

I have tried to avoid focusing on the lunatic fringe as though they established the norm; I also have not dismissed all healing claims as works of Satan. Above all, I have prayed that this book would not appear to put God in a box or in any way unbiblically limit our omnipotent Lord.

I deeply desire to make a positive biblical contribution toward understanding how God works in the physical affairs of the human race, especially in the lives of Christians. To help accomplish that goal, some of the designed features in *The Healing Promise* include:

1. Seeking Scripture to understand God's will in the matter of healing.
2. Setting Scripture above experience when interpreting claims of healing.
3. Seeing God's hand in our health and healing at all times.
4. Exposing outright fraud or false doctrine.
5. Interacting with those who have also written on healing.
6. Equipping Christians to biblically deal with sickness in their own life, in their family, in the body of Christ, and in the world.
7. Allowing God to be God.

I have prayed that God would use *The Healing Promise* as a ready reference tool for pastors and laypeople who must continually minister to the sick and suffering. It is also intended to equip the saints for understanding the issues of life and death, and to be effective in ministering to those who now suffer. Portions of this material can encourage and strengthen the sick because through it they can better understand the truth of God's Word and the direction of God's will. My chief objectives include 1) glorifying God in all His majesty, 2) honoring God in His ministry to the church, to both the healthy and the ailing, and 3) letting God's Word be the final arbiter in these issues.

Without the gifted help of devoted friends and family members, *The Healing Promise* would still be a pile of illegible notes. My wife "B," my son Wade, and my secretary Cindy Kranich all labored furiously on the computer to keep endless streams of rewrites moving forward.

Elaine Bersosa, John Metcalf, and Dennis Swanson lent their invaluable computer and transcription expertise to the project. Jim Stizinger and The Master's Seminary library

staff tirelessly helped me obtain a seemingly never-ending supply of books and articles written on healing. Terry Holley and Lance Quinn alerted me to some key books that I otherwise would have missed.

André Kole, one of the world's renowned illusionists, John and Patricia MacArthur, friends for 15 years in ministry, and Joni Eareckson Tada, champion extraordinaire for the handicapped, have all significantly enriched me personally as well as *The Healing Promise*, for which I thank them and the Lord.

Eileen Mason, Steve Miller, and Barbara Sherrill at Harvest House Publishers have given me the kind of opportunity and encouragement that most writers dream of but rarely experience.

Even though *The Healing Promise* has unquestionably been a team project, I must stand accountable before God and to the church for its content and conclusions. I can only pray that our Lord will be pleased to use it in effective ministry to the body of Christ.

Richard Mayhue

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THE HEALING PROMISE

Part 1
**A Perspective
for Today**



1

God's Healing Promise



God heals! Let's acknowledge that up front. To say anything else rejects the biblical witness to God's majesty and unending power. To deny healing would be to deny God's promise and would be to call God a liar.

This precious truth has not been lost on the great hymn-writers of the past. Listen to their grand declarations:

Praise, my soul, the King of heaven,
To His feet thy tribute bring;
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
Evermore His praises sing. . . .¹

Out of my bondage, sorrow and night,
Jesus, I come, Jesus, I come;
Into Thy freedom, gladness and light,
Jesus, I come to Thee.
Out of my sickness into Thy health,
Out of my want and into Thy wealth,
Out of my sin and into Thyself,
Jesus, I come to Thee.²

More Questions Than Answers

But to believe and sing this truth in worship doesn't always mean that we understand it. To overstate or understate this truth is to misconstrue it, and not to fully understand this truth means we can easily misuse it.

The subject of divine healing raises many important questions. Consider this sample:³

- Does Christ heal today as He did on the pages of the Gospels?
- What is the relationship between Satan and sickness?
- Can Satan imitate divine healing?
- Are we showing a lack of faith when we visit a doctor for help with an illness?
- What is the relationship of sin and sickness to divine healing?
- Is medical care a last resort or the first line of defense for Christians?
- Has something gone wrong when godly people are chronically ill?
- What is the role of faith in divine healing?
- Why does God heal some people and not others?
- Can non-Christians experience divine healing?
- Is an emphasis on miraculous healing more suited to mission contexts where medical resources are not readily available?
- How is God healing today?
- Is it always God's will to heal?
- Will He heal me? Or a friend? Or a family member?

Toward Biblical Answers

I have always been impressed with Reuben A. Torrey's little volume *Divine Healing*, originally written in 1924.⁴ The situation in his day parallels what we now experience 70 years later in the 1990's:

The subject of divine healing is awakening an unusual interest in all parts of our country at the present time. Much is being said in favor of it, even by persons who have been opposed to the doctrine in times past; much is being said against it on every hand. The land is being flooded with religious adventurers who are taking advantage of the widespread interest in this important subject to deceive and rob the people.⁵

Dr. Torrey modeled the approach that we are now using in *The Healing Promise*. He stated:

A book is greatly needed that considers with utter impartiality all that God has to say on this subject and that has but one aim: to discover exactly what God teaches on this very important subject, and *all* He teaches.⁶

Dr. Torrey's wise counsel demands that we thoroughly inspect the Scriptures. Our purpose will be to discover *all* that God has prescribed. Only through the thorough study of God's Word can we expect biblical answers to our questions.

Both doctrine and experience are essential elements in healthy Christianity. An authentic experience of God's truth always issues from His Word as the source. Few areas of current interest are more confused than divine healing, because God's priority of first *understanding truth* and then *interpreting experience* has too often been reversed or ignored.

*If you need healing,
what can you
expect from God?*

"Jesus brought the healing promise of God but his enemies killed him. Just what that healing gift involves is the subject of this important and encouraging book. You are highly privileged to read this treasure and come away with the richness of God's healing promise"

-from the foreword by John MacArthur

God can heal, this is a truth clearly evident from Scripture. We can agree, with absolute certainty, that God still possesses the power to do the miraculous.

But is God using the Faith Healers?

In *The Healing Promise* Richard Mayhue provides straight answers without compromising the Bible or God's miraculous power.

The Healing Promise includes -

A special interview with **Joni Eareckson Tada** where she talks about coping with the attitudes towards healing she encounters every day

A chapter by **André Kole**, the man behind many of **David Copperfield's** illusions, on techniques used in healing meetings.

A special interview with **John and Patricia MacArthur** about their experiences when Patricia was badly injured in a car accident.

Richard Mayhue is Vice President and Dean of The Master's Seminary in Sun Valley, California. He has also written

What would Jesus say about Your Church?

(Christian Focus) ISBN 1 85792 150X and

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