

John 5:1-9 (NIV)

- 1 Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a feast of the Jews.
- 2 Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades.
- 3 Here a great number of disabled people used to lie--the blind, the lame, the paralyzed.
- 4 (NKJV) For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had.
- 5 One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years.
- 6 When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?"
- 7 "Sir," the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me."
- 8 Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk."
- 9 At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. The day on which this took place was a Sabbath

43-05-01b-Do You Want to Get Well?

illness, perspective, healing

John 5:6

God desires our wholeness, starting with our minds.

INTRODUCTION: (John 5:1-9 as the Scripture reading)

–We want to know things, so we ask God questions. Often, they're **why** questions: "*Why did You let that happen?*" Or **what** questions: "*What should I do?*" Some ask for a **yes-or-no**: "*Should I go there or not?*"

[**Bruce Larson**, in *What God Wants to Know*, said God has questions for us.] One is the question Jesus asked a lame man at the Bethesda pool in **John 5:6**, *When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?"* (**title**). *Healing of the mind* is an area like the Bethesda pool: it only gets stirred up occasionally.

–[**When I worked ER & Psych** (as "RN"), I saw many *failures* in medical treatments of *physical and mental illnesses*. It skewed my perspective on *people getting well.*]

–Perspective guides focus; it narrows our perceptions and expectations.

[**Bruce Larson** told of a family's Florida vacation. At a beach, they saw a sign saying *Naturist Camp*. Thinking it meant *naturalist camp*, they parked. A naked group on bicycles pass by them. Their 5-yr old boy exclaimed, "*Look... they're not wearing safety helmets.*" He saw things by his expectations: they needed *safety helmets!*]

–*God's questions* aren't for *His* own learning, but for us to learn about ourselves. He asks "*Do you want to get well?*" to help us move our focus from *our problems* to our *attitudes*. **HOM.idea.** *Why? Because of...*

I. Where Our Thinking Can Bring Us

- A. The "man... [with] an infirmity thirty-eight years" thought, "*I'm helpless.*"
 1. We see this in his evasive answer to Jesus' question (**not** a *direct, expected answer*: "*Of course! Absolutely! When do we start?*")
 2. Not a *positive answer* but an explanation: "*I have issues to talk about before 'getting well.'*" (also **not** a *direct response* to Jesus)
 3. BUT, though Jesus saw his condition ("lying there" *helpless*) and knew his circumstances (paralyzed "38 years"), He aimed a **special question** at the **most important target**: the man's *mental attitude*.
- B. Verbalized mental complaints can express an unhealthy focus:
 1. a victimization perspective– "*I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred.*" ("*Family, friends, and society have failed me! I'd be doing fine by now, if only others had done their part!*")
 2. or a focus on dashed hopes and shattered dreams– "*While I am trying*

to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.” (As *victims*, we say...

- a. “*I did ‘try harder, as I was told, but it got me nowhere!’*” OR
 b. “*Others get all the breaks! God must be against me!*”— such an attitude reverses the question, asking God, “*Do You want me to get well?*” It reveals our doubt that our healing is God’s will.)

TRANS: God’s answer to our *reversed question* is a 100% “YES!” But our “yes” to His “*Do you want to get well?*” is not always said with 100% confidence. So, **in bringing us wholeness, He starts with our minds**. This paralyzed man was also paralyzed by a mindset of *victimization and hopelessness that led to despair*. But it also led to a place called *Bethesda* [“house of grace”]. In his perspective, acts of grace came to others, but never to him. Then he met Jesus....

II. Jesus Brought Grace in His Question, “Do you want to get well?”

- A. His question offered more than a miracle:
1. People seeking miracles aren’t always seeking God. (Some healed at the Bethesda pool went home happy but without the Healer.)
 2. God wants His miracles to create in people a thirst for Him.
 3. Jesus offered personal interaction that no healing pool could give, and His same question offers us today *that same interaction!*)
- B. But His question also validates the power of human free-will:
1. Psychology & psychosomatic medicine testify that our *thoughts* affect the *body*. (Our *self* is a union of “spirit, soul and body.”)
 2. Human wills can collaborate with health or work against it [**Bruce Larson**’s relative was told he’d die in 6 months if he didn’t stop smoking and drinking. He said he’d rather die in 6 than live 50 abstaining. He died in 3.]
 3. By addressing the will, Jesus puts the responsibility for wholeness of mind back into our own hands (if we’re trying to be rid of it):
 - a. We must abandon blaming and complaining [**Carl Rogers**, said at the *only hopeless counselees are those blaming others for their problems.*”]
 - b. We’re held accountable for choosing between *positive* or *negative thinking* [**Martin Seligman**, in *Learned Optimism*, says that we all have in our hearts a *yes* or a *no*. We respond to life either negatively or positively. If we can learn to put the *yes* into practice, it will change the course of our lives.]

TRANS: All healed at the Bethesda pool finally died, even this man. Till Jesus returns with “a new heaven and new earth,” physical healing is

temporary. Full restoration of the body comes on Resurrection Day. But **His desire for our wholeness starts with our minds right now!**

III. Do We Want the Wholeness God Offers Us Now?

- A. God’s question “*Do you want to get well?*” leads us to ask ourselves...
1. *Will we trust His diagnosis of what needs healing in us?*
 2. *Will we agree to the treatment He prescribes for our special case?*
 3. *Will we stay on His healing regimen, following the orders of Our Great Physician? (If we won’t, we have a poor prognosis.)*
- B. If we’re serious about wanting “to get well,” there’s another *crucial* question to ask ourselves: *Will we make room for God’s healing?*
1. Jesus told us, “Give and it shall be given unto you.” (Are we ready to give *wholeness* to others in our *thoughts, words, and deeds*?)
 2. Jesus taught us to pray, “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” [**One doctor asked a lady** with sudden-onset, crippling rheumatoid arthritis, “*Has anything unusual happened to you recently?*” “*Oh, yes, I know exactly what you mean, and furthermore, I have no intention of forgiving him!*” She was clearly crippled from her *unmet need of being forgiving*.]
 3. “*Let go and let God*” is a divine prescription for receiving healing. We can’t accept *grace* by holding on to *disgrace*. (*Confession makes room for forgiveness*.)
 - a. We can’t receive healing for *old hurts and wounds*, if we hold on to them. (Leave them *at the Cross, where Jesus took them*.)
 - b. We cannot receive *God’s wholeness* for our *own broken souls* if we have a tight grip on the sins that touched us from other broken lives. (From that Cross, Jesus showed us how to pray, “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Yes, *let go and let God*.)

CONCLUSION:

—**God desires our wholeness, starting with our minds**. Choosing *new birth in Christ* heals our **spirit**. But *ongoing health* in our **soul-life** is by walking **with Christ** by the Holy Spirit. It’s not automatic: we must choose new life in Christ, and we must *choose to live out* that new life. —**Jesus showed that God’s wants to heal**. He’s even now working at more needing healing in our lives. Only in Heaven will some things get healed, but at this stage of our journey, He wants us **whole and healthy in our hearts and minds**, so He still asks us, “*Do you want to get well?*”