

GOD'S POWER

for

HEALING

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Melanie Hemry & Gina Lynnes



WHITAKER
HOUSE

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GOD'S POWER FOR HEALING

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Introduction

By Melanie

Introduction

A CLOSER LOOK AT HEALING

As a registered nurse, I spent a good portion of my career fighting to save lives in the intensive care unit. Like most health care professionals, I've seen the inexplicable; a brain dead judge who after the proof of three flat EEGs (brain wave tests), received a cerebral jump-start from God and not only recovered, but went on to try a staggering number of cases on the federal court circuit.

I witnessed a dead man, who after a long and fruitless resuscitation, drew a deep breath from God, sat up in bed, and described in intricate detail what each of us had done and said during the long labor over his corpse. Not only was his

rendition of what happened accurate, but it posed two irrefutable questions for each of us in that room. First, how did a dead man hear what we said? His heart wasn't beating, and he wasn't breathing. In other words, his body wasn't capable of hearing or seeing. If you believe that man is made in the image of God with three parts—spirit, soul, and body—the experience makes sense, because our spirit never dies. The second question that arose in the aftermath of that experience was this: How could a dead man, lying flat in bed with a mask over his nose and mouth and his eyes closed, have seen which of us started his IV and which handled the defibrillator? He explained that his spirit hovered at ceiling height and watched the drama unfold.

For me, perhaps the most poignant turning point in my life happened when I was a very backslidden Baptist in the early years of my career. One of my patients was the picture of a precious saint of God. Small, grey-haired with smile lines around her eyes and gentleness and peace that she wore with dignity even in death. She'd suffered a brain stem stroke and did not respond to deep painful stimuli. I happened to be standing beside her bed when the alarm sounded on her heart monitor. I looked up and saw that her heart had stopped. At that very second, I witnessed a miracle, for in the natural what I saw was impossible. Brain dead and with no heartbeat, that saint sat up in bed, opened her eyes and lifted one hand in the air as though in greeting. I do not have words to describe the rapture on her face or the love that dripped off the word I heard her speak.

"Jesus!" she cried, sounding much like a woman who had seen her Lover after a long absence. Every hair on my body stood on end as she closed her eyes and floated back onto the

pillow...gone. I knew she was gone and that I would never see her again this side of heaven.

I believe the Lord let me witness that extraordinary moment because I'd gotten so immersed in the natural side of life and death that my heart had grown cold to the spiritual side. In the twinkling of an eye, that dear woman passed from one world to the next and God shocked life back into my soul. In a nanosecond of time, I understood that for all the things we know and see, there are even more that we don't know and can't see except through the eyes of faith.

I mention that experience because death is an integral part of life. It's a door through which each of us will pass if Jesus carries. Let's face it, heaven is the best of all worlds, which is why the apostle Paul yearned to depart this earth, yet chose to tarry in order to help the young church. I believe that the little lady who welcomed Jesus like a lover would not have stayed earthbound if given a choice.

One of my dear friends has both a mother and a daughter in heaven and in her words, "Heaven is truly sounding sweeter all the time." In my nursing career, I've seen Christians who could have, even in the natural, lived and not died, but the lure of heaven, Jesus, and loved ones on the other side was irresistible. They understood why Paul penned these words in Philippians 1:21, "*For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*"

How wonderful it will be to see Him face-to-face! Just imagine what heaven will be like! No more pain; no tears. No more sickness; no death. Like waves that kiss the shore and then are pulled back into the deep, we have a brief sojourn on earth while being drawn to His eternal presence.

The thing we must remind ourselves is that word *eternal*. We will get to spend eternity with Jesus, but we have only a few brief years to walk this firma terra, to feel the wind in our face, to live and love by faith. So while we're here, let's make the most of every day, and not let the enemy of our souls cut our mission short.

The purpose of this book is not to deny the glory of heaven. It is simply to encourage you to live your life to the fullest, and understand that the anointing to heal is available for you each step along your path.

I must admit that Gina and I have the best jobs in the world. We are God-scribes who have the privilege of testifying about what happens when the prayers of men and the power of God intersect.

We live in the day of satellite news and instant communication via cyberspace, yet God's interaction with man is the single most underreported story on earth. May you be blessed as you think on these things.

Part One

STUMBLING INTO THE
HEALING POWER OF
GOD

By Gina

Part One

STUMBLING INTO THE HEALING POWER OF GOD

Had I known I was about to open the door for a miracle that stifling summer night in 1978, I would have marked the date on my calendar. But I didn't.

As far as I could tell, God wasn't in the miracle business anymore. He'd somehow lost interest in it shortly after the book of Acts was written. I'd heard of occasional exceptions, of course. Everybody does. Now and then it would be rumored that a miracle had happened in Africa or China or some other faraway place. But like most urban myths, such miracles usually happened to somebody's neighbor's friend's uncle's brother-in-law whose exact name no one really knows.

Whether or not such reports were valid, I could not say. But I was fairly sure that if God did decide to perform a miracle in 1978, He would find a more auspicious place to do it than in my little green asphalt-shingled house in San Angelo, Texas. And He would definitely be looking for someone far worthier of that miracle than I.

But then again, it never hurts to ask...and I was desperate. My baby's life was at stake. I had no other choice but to put her into God's hands. All other hands had failed her.

Lifting my daughter's fragile form from her crib, I cradled her as if she might crumble beneath my touch. So perfect, yet so dangerously delicate, she seemed to me like the gossamer globe of a dandelion that at any moment might slip through my fingers and float away in the breeze. In an instant, she could be gone. At nine months old, she weighed far less than she should, not only because of malnutrition but because of dehydration. The skin stretched over her tiny bones was dry and papery. Unlike the spongy, pink flesh of healthy babies, it had no resilience. If I tugged it gently upward to check its condition, it stayed there. If I pressed on it, the indentation left by my finger remained.

Ever since we'd brought her home from the hospital as a four-pound preemie, I had searched frantically to find some kind of formula or food she could digest. I'd taken her to the doctor again and again. But still, the food wouldn't stay in her stomach. Eventually, the doctors gave up on trying to help her—either because they had exhausted their medical resources or because we had exhausted our financial resources, I will never know which. Either way, the result was the same. My husband and I had been left on our own to figure out how to keep our premature daughter alive.

We'd done everything we knew to do. But what we knew simply wasn't enough.

A jagged sob shoved its way from my heart to my throat as I pressed my lips against the tiny, pale face I'd kissed so many thousands of times during the past few months. Closing my eyes, I blocked out the sight of her hollow cheeks and sunken eyes, and breathed in her sweetness. But I couldn't keep my eyes closed forever. I had to face the truth. The fiery sparkle that had once lit my daughter's eyes was beginning to fade. The nightmare would soon be over.

One way or the other, her endless hours of crying from the pain of hunger would give way to silence. One way or the other, the long nights would end. Nights of walking the floor trying to comfort her, hoping that perhaps tonight she'd keep some milk down and be able to sleep. Nights when the crying would finally stop and I'd stand over her bed holding my breath so I could hear the faint whisper of her breathing and be sure she was still alive.

One way or the other, my little Jennifer would soon find peace. Either the hand of death would take her...or the hand of God would heal her.

I had no right to expect the latter and I knew it. A backslidden Baptist, I'd been straying from God for years, living my own life my own way. Although I'd been raised in church and taught the Bible from the time I was a toddler, in my twenties I'd decided that the God of the Bible and the principles of Scripture were too confining. I'd thrown them off so that I could be free.

As I threw away those principles, I never thought about the promises that accompanied them. It never occurred to me

just how desperately I might someday need those promises and the power of the God who made them. That is, until I began to see the little girl I had longed for, the daughter I'd dreamed of since my own childhood, slipping away.

People sometimes joke about foxhole religions. But when you're actually the one in the foxhole and mortality is staring you in the eyes, you stop laughing. My husband and I found that out for ourselves. As we saw the blossom of our daughter's life withering away, we joined the foxhole faithful and decided to do the last thing we knew to do. The last thing we thought we would ever do. We threw ourselves on the mercy of God.

We had no church to go to, no formal place to make our petition. So we created our own altar of sorts by spreading a baby blanket over the worn gold carpet on our living room floor. In the center of that flannel altar, we placed our daughter. Kneeling beside her, we bowed our heads—something we had never done together before—and prayed.

“Dear God, we have no other hope for our baby. We ask You tonight to heal her and we put her into Your hands. We will trust You because we have nowhere else to put our trust. In Jesus' name, Amen.”

In Ben Franklin's Footsteps

Sometimes when I think about what happened that night, I'm reminded of old Benjamin Franklin. I think of him waving his key-laden kite hoping to connect with a lightning bolt of heavenly power. A million things could have gone wrong with his experiment. The bolt might have bypassed his

key and found a better target. The storm could have blown over before he successfully hoisted his kite aloft. I suppose he even could have electrocuted himself. But, by some happy, divinely ordained accident, Ben Franklin made the power connection.

That night, I, too, reached out to make a power connection. I hoped against hope that the prayer I waved heavenward might work as well as old Ben's kite did. When the praying was over, I put my tiny daughter into her crib, and exhausted from the emotion of the evening, I went to bed and fell asleep.

Sometime around 2:00 a.m., I sat upright, slapped awake by the morgue-like silence of the house. For the first time I could remember, Jennifer was not crying. *She's dead!* The thought catapulted me from under the covers and, heart pounding, I bolted from the bed.

But before I took even one step, another thought—one that seemed to come from an entirely different place—apprehended me. *You have put her in God's hands. Leave her there. You can do nothing more for her anyway. Why not just trust Him?*

For reasons I still cannot explain, the idea seemed to make perfect sense. Silently, I slipped back between the sheets. "I trust You, heavenly Father," I said. Then I put my head on my pillow and slept.

When I opened my eyes hours later, my bedroom was drenched with sunshine and the house was still silent. *How late is it?...Oh, no...Dear God, no...*The peaceful trust of the night before had vanished. What had I done? How could I have just left her alone like that? To die alone?

Within seconds I was standing at her bedroom door. Rigid with fear, I stopped. One more step and I would see her lying there in her crib. One more step and I would know how the story had ended. In a kind of deadly anticipation, my skin went cold, and for a moment, I stopped breathing.

Moving to the side of her crib, my eyes swam with tears as I looked down at my silent baby, lying on her back, kicking her feet and smiling up at me in contentment. She was as happy and peaceful as I had ever seen her. She had slept all the way through the night.

From that day on, the food stayed down. The sparkle once stolen from her blue eyes found its way back. Soon, instead of hovering over her in fear, I found myself running to catch her as she dashed across the park, or through the yard, or down the aisle of the grocery store.

For some mysterious reason that I wouldn't understand until years later, God had come out of retirement and worked a miracle. He had healed my little girl.

That was my first experience with *the healing promises of God*. Some call it an *anointing* of healing. I wouldn't have used that phrase that back then. I wouldn't have been comfortable with it. I thought the *anointing* was just an old Bible word.

In the years that have passed since I first encountered it, however, I've discovered that God's anointing power is much more than that. It is the miracle-working power of the Holy Spirit. It is God's mighty, supernatural ability coming on the scene to do what only He can do. According to the Bible, the anointing is what sets God's people free from the bondage and destruction the devil tries to inflict on them. Isaiah 10:27 puts it this way: "*And it shall come to pass in that day, that his*

burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.”

Based on that verse, one minister I know defines the anointing as God’s burden-removing, yoke-destroying power. It’s the power that Jesus operated in when He was on the earth. He said so Himself. At the beginning of His ministry, He declared,

The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.
(Luke 4:18–19)

You’d think that one miracle would have revolutionized my life. You’d think it would have instantly made a more devoted Christian—if not a towering faith giant—out of me. But according to the Bible, “*...faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*” (Romans 10:17). It doesn’t come just by seeing miracles. Once Jennifer was healed, I left my Bible unopened on my nightstand, so the spiritual spark kindled by God’s merciful intervention in my life was soon smothered under the demands of daily living.

I went back to washing dishes, changing my baby’s diapers, chasing after my two energetic sons, and cleaning house. As the days marched on marked by nothing so much as their monotonous normality, my miracle, like all miracles eventually are, was swallowed up by the mundane details of life.

When Lightning Strikes Twice

It's been said that lightning never strikes the same place twice. If that were true, spiritually speaking, I would never have experienced the shock of seeing a miracle again. But I did. In fact, six years later I found myself staring at a veritable stack of them.

Instead of floating down from heaven, as one might imagine miracles should, they were tossed en masse on my desk by the rusty-haired editorial director of the publications department of a major Christian ministry where I'd recently landed a job. "Here's your first assignment," he said, pitching the dog-eared pile of notes and letters my way. "Sort through these testimonies and pick out the best ones. Then call the people who sent them and set up interviews."

Uninspired by the task before me, I sighed and thought about how long it had been since I'd heard someone "give their testimony." I remembered my childhood days in church when people would tell the details about the time they gave their lives to Jesus. Their stories were numbingly similar and usually included an evangelist coming to town to preach a revival, resisting the conviction of the Holy Spirit for the entire week, then walking the aisle on the very last night during the very last chorus of "I Surrender All" and getting saved. *Eat your heart out, Woodward and Bernstein. I get to write about this stuff.*

Despite their lack of dramatic tension, I could appreciate such stories more now than I could then. A few years after Jennifer was healed, I'd finally found out what it meant to surrender all to Jesus. I'd gotten so tired of myself—of my stinking selfishness, my out of control flesh, and my train-wreck of a life—that I'd finally, truly made Him my Lord. In the process,

I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fell totally in love with God. Although I'd been a writer by profession for years, from then on, all I really cared about was telling people about Jesus. So when I'd gotten an opportunity to go to work for a ministry and write about Him full time, I jumped at it.

My dream job. Yeah, right. Interviewing people about their childhood revival experiences.

Leafing through the envelopes scattered across my desk, one in particular snagged my eye. Scarred and smudged from its long journey, it bore a stack of peculiar, brightly colored stamps in the upper right-hand corner postmarked Haiti. *Haiti?* I thought. *That might be fun. I wonder what revivals are like there.*

Unfolding the letter, I quickly skimmed the contents starting with the signature—Joel Jeune. Highlights...started a Christian orphanage in Haiti a few years ago...also Christian school...raised from the dead as a child...

What? I caught my breath. *This can't be for real.* I read it again. As well as I can remember now, the letter went something like this:

...My father was away from home preaching in the mountains the day I died. By the time he returned, I had been dead for two days. My body already nailed in a casket, the burial was about to take place. My father returned to find the funeral procession carrying me to the cemetery. "Put the coffin down!" he demanded. "The day this boy was born, the Lord told me in a prophecy that he would be a great preacher. God said that he would win many souls here in Haiti and that his ministry would be great.

Put him down. God cannot lie!" Then he and the others around him began to pray. Soon they heard a sneeze inside the coffin. When they pried it open, they found me alive.

Stunned, I dropped the letter as if the lunacy that drove this poor, misguided person to write it might somehow be transferred to me. *Well, at least it wasn't boring.*

I set the letter aside and picked up another one. Throwing it down, I picked up another...then another...then another. There wasn't a revival story among them. They were all personal testimonies of people who had been supernaturally healed.

Despite my attempt to maintain a sense of journalistic indifference, tears spilled down my cheeks and onto the letters that now lay open on my desk. Since Jennifer's recovery, my only foray into the questionable territory of healing had taken place a just few months earlier when my sister, Susan, and had been extremely sick. She was a part of a little Bible study group that had been had meeting at my house. We jointly determined we should we should muster the courage to obey James 5:17 and pray for healing. Trying to behave with the dignity of spiritual elders, we paraded down the street to Susan's house, clutching our Bibles. In truth, we felt more like a gaggle of first graders trying to build a rocket for the school science fair. But we did it anyway. We prayed in faith for her to be healed by the next morning. Sure enough, she was.

Even so, I'd been afraid to get my hopes up about divine healing. I'd heard for too many years that the day of miracles had passed away...that even if you pray for healing, you

probably won't get it because many times (perhaps even most times) it's actually God's will for us to be sick...He may even send the sickness Himself in order to teach us something... you just never know what God is going to do.

Sure, I'd seen a couple of prayers for healing answered. But then, some people wish on falling stars and occasionally those wishes come true. That doesn't mean they should run out and join the First Church of the Falling Stars. A couple of isolated outbreaks of healing wasn't enough to turn me into a faith nut. I had remained guardedly skeptical.

Under the weight of the testimonies I'd just read, however, my skepticism began to crumble. All the hope that had been dammed up inside me through the years poured forth in a torrent of joyful tears. Scooping up the letters, I hugged them to myself. These weren't the writings of liars or lunatics, they were the stories of real people who had seen God work real miracles in their lives. And there were too many of them to ignore.

Searching the Scriptures to Find the Truth

Enthusiastic as I was about the empirical evidence for healing that had been piled on my desk, I still wasn't willing to run willy-nilly down the theological path the testimonies seemed to point to—no matter how many of them there were. I'd spent too many years being deceived and drawn off course by man-made philosophies based on the experiences, observations, and opinions of human beings. I was determined never to do that again.

A couple of years earlier, I had made a firm decision to base all of my spiritual beliefs only upon the clear teaching of the Bible. There would be no compromise. No adding to or taking away from what the Scriptures themselves said was so.

Since I'd made that decision, my life had blossomed. I'd been more blessed and more peaceful than ever before. So, even though the healing testimonies had inspired me, I pledged to follow the example of the Berean Jews in the book of Acts who heard Paul preach the gospel and "*searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so*" (Acts 17:11).

What I discovered not only thrilled and surprised me, it gloriously contradicted many of the things I'd heard about divine healing (or the lack of it) all my life. For example, I'd often been told that when people pray for healing, even if they pray in faith, sometimes God says *no*. I had always assumed that was true. After all, God has the right to do whatever He likes and if He wants to refuse someone's request for healing He can.

The more I studied what the Bible has to say about the matter, the more I realized the very idea is preposterous. The Bible covers six thousand years of God's dealings with mankind, and it doesn't record even one instance when God refused to heal one of His children who reached out to Him in faith. On the contrary, both the Old Testament and the New Testament reveal a God who is willing and able to heal all who call upon Him 100 percent of the time.

What's more, the Bible declares that Jesus is the "*express image*" (Hebrews 1:3) and the perfect reflection of His heavenly Father. He so accurately portrayed the will of God during His earthly ministry that He could say, "*He who has seen Me*

has seen the Father" (John 14:9). In light of those statements, I could draw only one conclusion. *If God reserves the right to refuse healing to some, even though they ask for it in faith, then Jesus would have surely refused to heal at least one person during His earthly ministry.*

I scoured the Gospels to find one such incident. But I couldn't. Instead, what I found was that God had anointed Jesus *"with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil"* (Acts 10:38)

God anointed Jesus to heal *all*. He never said *no* to anyone. When the multitudes came to Him to be healed *"power went out from Him and healed them all"* (Luke 6:19, emphasis added).

Still, I had questions. Since the healings recorded in the Gospels took place before Jesus went to the cross when He was physically on the earth, I wondered. *Is healing still as available to us today as it was to the people who reached out to Him then?*

Once again, I dove headlong into the Scriptures to find the answer. What I learned was stunning. I found out that healing is not only as available to us today as it was then, it is more available to us today because God included healing in the plan of redemption. People today no longer have to go to a particular location and press through the crowds to touch Jesus' physical body and be healed. They can receive healing the same way they receive the new birth. They can receive it anytime, anywhere, by a simple prayer of faith.

That revelation was a shock to me because I'd always thought that when Jesus was crucified, He only paid the price

for the salvation of our souls, not for the healing of our bodies. But the Bible says, “Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows....But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:4–5).

Some people say the healing mentioned in that verse refers to spiritual healing and not physical. But in my studies, I found that same passage quoted in the New Testament in reference to Jesus’ *physical* healing of the multitudes. According to Matthew 8:17, “Jesus healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.”

The Bible left no doubt about it. Jesus had provided for our spiritual salvation *and* our physical healing at Calvary. Because of what He did, healing belongs to every born-again child of God. Like salvation, it is received by simple faith and therefore comes most easily not to those who are intellectually wise and sophisticated, nor to those who are usually considered highly spiritual, but to those who will embrace it with childlike humility.

I will always be glad that the majority of the people Jesus healed during His earthly ministry were not great scholars or spiritual giants. They were just ordinary Joes, everyday people who believed and spoke and acted like Jesus would heal them. They were regular folks like me.

After a few months of study, the issue was settled for me. The evidence in the Word of God was indisputable. I finally knew beyond any doubt that Jennifer had been healed... and my sister had been healed...not just because of some

unexplainable cosmic accident, but because God in His great mercy had, through the sacrifice of His only begotten Son, provided healing—spirit, soul, and body—for all who would receive it by faith. I finally believed that God was willing and able to heal us all.

As Simple as One...Two...Three

When I was a little girl, my mother gave me a cookbook—*Easy Recipes for Kids* or something like that. I was barely tall enough to see above the kitchen counter at the time. Undaunted by my undersized stature, however, when the mood struck, I would don an oversized apron, open the cookbook, and gleefully set to work cracking eggs, splashing milk, and scooping sugar into a bowl (hopefully in the prescribed proportions).

Never mind that I'd never attempted that particular recipe before. Never mind that I had no idea why the eggs were necessary, or how on earth sliding the whole sloppy mess into a 350-degree oven would transform it into a cake like the one pictured in the cookbook. I didn't need to know all that. I simply had faith in the cookbook and in my mother who had given it to me. As children do, I just believed that the cookbook was telling me the truth and that if I followed the directions in it, I would achieve the desired result.

Thank God, in 1984 when I first discovered the truth about divine healing, I was naive enough to tackle it with the same childlike confidence. I hadn't yet been introduced to the spiritual sages who would one day inform me that there are many complexities involved in healing that I might not understand. God, in His grace, had protected me for a season from

the spiritual pundits who profess to know far more about God (yet seem to receive far less from Him) than silly spiritual children who take the Bible literally.

Those folks hadn't gotten to me yet. Instead, I was surrounded with good news. My eyes and ears were filled only with the Word of God and the testimonies of people who had experienced the wonder of divine healing. For a while, all was bliss. I was full of robust faith that should I ever need healing, I would surely believe for it and receive it.

Of course, when you don't need healing, when you're feeling fine, such confidence is easy to come by. I found that out sometime in October 1985 when reality hit me in the form of a raging internal infection. Assaulted by fever, weakness, and a relentless pain that made every step an exercise in agony, the healing truths I'd learned suddenly seemed more impractical than I had initially believed. Temporarily casting them aside, I rushed to the doctor. He gave me a prescription of powerful antibiotics (a three week course of treatment, as I recall) and told me it might well be several weeks before I saw significant improvement. Since I had a history of such infections, I knew that in purely natural terms his diagnosis was accurate. I went home that evening and took the first pill.

The next day at the office was excruciating, but somehow I hobbled and winced my way through. Winding up my work at five o'clock, I glanced up at the shelf above my desk where my Bible lay unopened next to a book entitled, *God's Will for You Is Healing*, a book which in its directness and simplicity was much like *Easy Recipes for Kids* in that it provided straightforward directions that were drawn from the Bible and designed to help anyone (even spiritual novices like me) receive healing from God.

The directions went something like this. First: Go to the Bible and find a Scripture that promises you healing and take your stand of faith upon that promise. Second: Confess out loud your faith in that promise. Third: Begin to act as though your healing is already done. Act in faith.

No question about it. That was a good book. Pulling my car keys from my purse, I rose from my chair and headed toward the door when a familiar thought apprehended me.

Why don't you just trust God and follow the instructions?

I stopped, flashing back on the time years before when a very similar question had convinced me to go back to bed and leave my daughter in the hands of God. *Yes, why not?*

Sinking back into my chair, I listened as the sounds of my coworkers gathering their belongings and going home for the day drifted over the bluish gray partitions that formed my office cubicle. Florescent lights flickered then winked out here and there throughout the office. Somewhere an office door clicked shut. That's when I knew if I didn't act on what I'd learned about healing, a divine door would close in my life. I'd lose the revelation and the healing light in my heart would go out.

Just take the first step. Find a Scripture that promises you healing and take your stand of faith upon that promise.

The instant I made my decision, the faith I'd been building over the past few months came roaring to life. I snatched my Bible from the shelf, leafed through the pages and found Psalm 103. Verses 1–3 leaped up at me, shimmering with healing promise.

*Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me,
bless His holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, and*

*forget not all His benefits: who forgives all your iniquities,
who heals all your diseases.*

From childhood I had been taught that God instantly and fully forgives all the sins of every repentant person who asks for that forgiveness by faith in the blood of Jesus. Believing that was effortless for me. When I did something wrong and asked God to forgive me, it never occurred to me to doubt His forgiveness. I didn't check to see if I felt forgiven, or if I saw any immediate sign of that forgiveness. I just believed God forgave me because the Bible said He would.

I looked again at Psalm 103. It not only said that God forgives all my sins. It said He heals all my diseases. *Why should I believe the first statement and doubt the second? Why should I act as if it were any more difficult to receive healing than it is to receive forgiveness?*

"Heavenly Father," I prayed, "I come before You now by faith in Jesus, trusting in His name and in His blood that was shed for me, because I need healing for this infection in my body. I see in Your Word that to You, forgiveness of sin and physical healing are the same. You have provided them both for me. So I ask You to heal me, and I believe I receive that healing now. I thank You for it, in Jesus' name, Amen."

The fourth chapter of Acts tells about a time when a group of believers in Jerusalem asked God to stretch forth His hand in healing power and the very building shook in answer to their prayer. The building didn't shake when I prayed that day in my bluish gray cubicle. Fire didn't fall. The wind of the Spirit didn't sweep through and blow the papers off my desk. As far as I could tell, nothing happened at all.

According to the instructions in the book, the next thing I needed to do was say out loud that I was healed. So I did exactly that. “I call my body healed in Jesus’ name!” I declared confidently to no one in particular.

As my voice faded to silence, I considered the final instruction. *Begin to act like you are healed.* “Lord, I don’t know what to do about this one. Exactly how do I act like I’m healed?”

What would you be doing at this time of day if you were healed?

“I’d be running the track at L. D. Bell High School, getting my daily workout.”

Then run.

Run? How could I run when just walking around the office had left me breathless with pain? How could I...?

You can do it because you are healed.

Oh yeah, that’s right. The pain almost made me forget. I’m supposed to act like I’m healed not because I feel healed but because I believe I am healed. I’m supposed to act in faith.

When Healing Comes

Some memories fade over the years. But my memory of the first lap around the track that night is as sharp as ever. With every step jagged shards of pain ripped through my body and one wicked thought jabbed at my mind. *You are not healed!*

“Yes, I am!” I answered, reaching within myself and finding miraculously the grace I needed to take another step.

More pain.

You are not healed! Unlike the comforting thoughts inspired by the Holy Spirit, this one tormented, mocked, and accused. All I knew to do was answer it by faith.

“Yes, I am healed.”

You are not!

“Yes, I am.”

The argument continued for exactly a quarter mile. One lap around the track. My normal run was three miles. With one lap behind me, I still had eleven to go. Eleven. I couldn't let myself think about it. Instead I forced myself to concentrate only on taking the next step—and on believing that God was faithful...that He could not and would not lie.

I must have experienced at that moment something of what the woman with the issue of blood felt some two thousand years ago when she pushed her way through the crowd that surrounded Jesus, convinced that if she could only touch His clothes she would be healed. (See Mark 5:28.) Admittedly, there were no multitudes on the track blocking the path to my Healer, only a couple of other joggers loping along in the shadows of dusk. But I still had to push my way through to Him.

Just as that bleeding lady had to push her way through twelve years of doctors trying and failing to cure her, twelve years of negative reports, twelve years of her body testifying day after day of its incurable infirmity...just as she had to push her way through the doubts that tried to block her way, thoughts that screamed through the pain and weakness, *You'll never make it. You'll die before you get to Him. Look how many others are trying and failing to touch Him. What makes you think you'll be the exception? What makes you think you'll get past the*

obstacles that have stopped everyone else and somehow be the one to get healed?...just like that, I had to push my way through a multitude of memories, pain, and fear to touch the place of true faith.

When the woman with the issue of blood finally reached Jesus, the Bible says that “*immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction*” (Mark 5:29). I know how she felt because that’s exactly what happened to me.

There were a few differences, of course. I wasn’t standing on a lakeshore in Galilee clutching the back of Jesus’ robe. I wasn’t believing that if I could touch Him, I *would be* healed. I was pounding out the second lap on a high school track in Hurst, Texas. And I was believing that Jesus had *already* touched me. I was believing, despite all natural evidence to the contrary, that I *was* healed.

The outcome, however, was the same. I felt, as surely as she did, the healing power of God wash over me. When it did every trace of pain instantly disappeared. The fever vanished. Every symptom of that infection fled, never to return again.

Healing doesn’t always come that way. Sometimes it comes gradually. Most often, it slips in without a single sensation to announce its arrival. But I will be forever grateful that the first time I knowingly reached out to receive my healing by faith in God’s Word, He let me actually feel His healing anointing.

It may not sound especially spiritual to say it this way, but that experience turned me into what country folk in my home state of Oklahoma call an *egg-eating hound*. Once such a dog has tasted an egg, it’s impossible to keep him out of the hen

house. Try as you may to discourage him, he can never forget what it was like to wrap his lips around that white-shelled delicacy. He'll spend the rest of his life trying to dig his way into the chicken coup.

I can sympathize. Once I experienced the sweetness of God's healing power, I knew I'd spend the rest of my life if that's what it took learning how to receive it for myself and how to share it with others. As I write this, more than two decades have passed since that night on the track. In those years, I've had some disappointments. I've experienced times of discouragement. I've had questions that weren't always answered.

But I've also seen for myself and interviewed many people who have experienced firsthand the kinds of miracles recorded in the Bible. Their experiences have not only fortified my faith in the healing promises and power of the Lord Jesus Christ, they have taught me a great deal about how to consistently receive healing whenever I need it. They have helped me live for many years in divine health.

When I first began recording the testimonies of those people, I wrote their stories myself. Then the Lord connected me with someone far more gifted at telling those stories than I am. Her name is Melanie Hemry. She and I have been best friends and writing buddies for many years now. We have laughed together and cried together countless hours over the healing stories we have been privileged to hear and record.

You wouldn't have the time to read—nor would she have the time to write—a book containing all of those stories. The volume is simply too great. So she has chosen five

sparkling gems to share with you. They are not vague urban myths. They contain real names and dates and places. They are definite, factual accounts of God's healing anointing at work today.

May they bless you as they have blessed us and inspire you to reach out and receive for yourself the healing anointing of God.