

Why Doesn't God Always Heal?

We acknowledge God has all power and can heal, but ...

One of my favorite accounts in the life of Jesus occurs in Mark 5. Jairus came to Jesus on behalf of his sick daughter, and Jesus willingly went with the man. On the way, though, they are slowed down when an older woman sought healing simply by touching Jesus' garments. Bam! She was healed.



Meanwhile, the little girl died. Jairus could've been cheezed with the old woman for causing the delay or been mad at Jesus for allowing Himself to be distracted from the original goal. Jesus was not swayed, though. He went to the home of Jairus, and in spite of others' disbelief and even laughter, He raised the young girl back to life.

I love this passage because it shows that nothing limits Jesus' power and ability to heal.

- An old woman
- A young girl
- Power over a chronic condition
- Power over death

We give lip service to Jesus' healing power, but we wonder why He doesn't always do that—Every. Single. Time. I don't have a once-size-fits-all answer, but I do know this:

God's focus is greater than ours. We focus on ourselves and do everything we can to live pleasure-filled, pain-free lives. There's no room for suffering in that scenario. We focus on ourselves but God focuses in His greater, eternal kingdom.

During His three years of ministry, Jesus didn't heal everyone. At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus was in Capernaum. Word spread about His presence, and "Jesus healed many who had various diseases" (Mark 1:34). He could've stayed and healed more, but Jesus left for another town "so I can preach there also. That is why I have come" (v. 38). His focus was on bringing people into His eternal kingdom, not simply making them feel better.

That sounds harsh. Jesus does love us and care about us, but we have such short-sighted goals. Consider this: every person Jesus healed—*everyone*—eventually died. In other words, the healing was temporary, but those who embraced His kingdom live with Him today.

But if God loves me, He wouldn't want me to suffer, would He? The presence of pain does not negate the presence of His love. Perhaps in His love, He desires to give us something far greater than the physical healing we seek.

God grows us through our pain. We think God should fix things *now*, but He may choose to use the trials we face to grow us closer to Him. Pain has a way of getting our attention. We're drawn to seek Him in prayer, to depend on Him. If we let Him, God will bring us to a greater place. We want relief; but He wants us to receive something greater: His undeniable love and presence.

God promises a pain-free eternity. That's hard to hold on to when the pain is present and we cry for relief now, but we can't lose sight of the temporariness of it all.

I'm not just offering ivory-tower theology with no basis in how life operates. I've lived with a chronic disease for 37 years. I'm thankful for the medicine at my disposal, but how I deal with it calls for an understanding that what I'm dealing with is temporary. This life is but a moment compared to the life that awaits me with Christ for eternity.



So what do we do?

1. **Pray.** Yes, Jesus does heal. He doesn't always heal, but neither does He never heal.

"Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up" (Jas. 5:14-15).

2. **Trust.** God knows what is best—He knows just what we need—and He will always answer out of His love. Even when it doesn't make sense to us, trust that He has heard and He answers.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,' declares the Lord. 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts'" (Isa. 55:8-9).

3. **Rejoice.** Sounds weird, huh? But if we've prayed, our faith in Christ leads us to trust that whatever answer He gives is just what we need. Rejoice in His love.

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything" (Jas. 1:2-4).