

# **Chapter 4**

## **Dealing With the Whole Man**

We are more than just a physical body. We are a spirit, soul, mind, and body. They are intertwined. One affects the other. When it comes to the healing of the body, we must be aware of the fact that the body does not stand alone. It is affected by the whole man. When God heals, He does not want to heal only the outer shell, the body. He wants His healing to go much deeper. He wants to heal our thinking, our emotions, our heart, and our soul. The mind affects the body. The emotions influence the body. Our attitudes affect our body. Even the state of our eternal soul affects our body.

There are several places in the Word of God where we see the confluence of these elements of the whole man. When God gave his commandments to Moses, He said,

*“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength.”*

The Apostles, who freely added their interpretation to it for clarity, quoted that passage from Deuteronomy 6:5. For instance, Matthew and Luke quote it almost verbatim:

*“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.”*  
– Matthew 22:27, Luke 10:27

Mark took the liberty of expanding it even further for clarity. He added “the mind.”

*“You shall therefore love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength: this is the first commandment.”* – Mark 12:30

When Paul prayed for the church to be sanctified, he prayed:

*“May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* – 1 Thessalonians 5:23

In doing so, he identified man as spirit, soul, and body. Never does the Word of God address us as simply bodies. God breathed life into Adam and he became a living soul.

In Hebrews we read that the Word of God *“is alive and active and it discerns between soul and spirit (soul and emotions), joints and marrow (the body), and is a judge of the thoughts and attitudes of the heart (mind and heart).”*

*<sup>12</sup> For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. <sup>13</sup> Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.*

*– Hebrews 4:12*

This is a great mystery, but it is a fact of life. If your mind is sick, soon your body will feel sick. If your spirit is sick, whether through bitterness, anger, hatred, or jealousy, it will show up in your body as an affliction. Does that mean that our minds and spirits cause sickness? Not necessarily. But certainly a tormented mind aggravates physical health, and a troubled spirit stresses any physical dysfunction. The spirit, soul, body, and mind are inseparable. They affect each other. They are inseparable. So, when we pray for healing, we need to know that God wants to heal, correct, mend, and fix the whole of you, not just your body.

Dr. S.I. McMillen wrote an interesting book titled *None of These Diseases* in 1967. In it, he showed the connection between sickness and disease to the emotional and mental state of his patients. He even was bold enough to state that at least 80% of the patients he saw were not just physically sick, but emotionally and spiritually sick, which exacerbated whatever illness they were suffering. He quotes another doctor who reported in 1948 that two-thirds of the patients he saw had symptoms caused or aggravated by mental stress. In 1958, another physician reported that the leading cause of all diseases is stress. In animal testing, researchers proved that bacteria alone does not cause disease. Stress lowers resistance to bacteria in both animals and humans.

Please don’t misunderstand Dr. McMillen’s statements. He is not saying our emotions cause all diseases and sicknesses. But he is pointing out the intricate

connection between disease and emotions. One affects the other, and vice versa. Sometimes the normal illness of the body is made worse by one's emotional state.

*“Certain emotions cause visible changes in the body, such as strokes, apoplexy, blindness, toxic goiters, fatal clots in the heart, bleeding ulcers, kidney disease and gangrene of the legs, to mention only a few.”* <sup>1</sup> (McMillen, *None of These Diseases*, pages 58)

The nervous system ties the body together. Nerve fibers carry messages throughout the body. The brain controls the body, sending invisible messages that affect all nerve endings. Glands of the body are susceptible to these messages from the brain. Emotional stress sends messages throughout the body that affect the function of bodily organs.

McMillen describes a wide variety of illnesses caused or aggravated by emotions such as fear, anxiety, anger, bitterness, envy, hatred, guilt, frustration, and other negative emotions that trigger stress throughout the body. He lists a few:

- Disorders of the Digestive System
- Disorders of the Circulatory System
- Disorders of the Genito-Urinary System
- Disorders of the Nervous System
- Disorders of the Glands of Internal Secretions
- Disorders of Allergic Reactions
- Disorders of Muscle & Joints
- Prolonged Infections
- Eye and Skin Diseases

<sup>2</sup> (McMillen, *None of These Diseases*, pages 61-62)

He says that **“It’s not what you eat—it’s what’s eating you.”** That is a biblical truth. Seeds of worry, fear, anxiety, guilt, jealousy, hatred, anger, self-hate, insecurity, sorrow, and resentment that are planted in the mind can spring up as negative emotions and create even deeper roots of bitterness. When roots of bitterness spring up, they trouble you and other people.

*Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. Make level paths for your feet, so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed. Make every effort to*

*live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness, no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.* – Hebrews 12:12-15

It is not our purpose to imply that if you are sick your mind or emotions may be sick, but it is important that we recognize the effect that the mind and emotions have on our health. Therefore, it is not only wise, but prudent, to examine your heart and mind as you seek the Lord for healing.

According to Jesus, every time we are facing a resistant sickness that won't go away by natural means, we need to search elsewhere for the cause and cure. Healing and dealing with personal struggles, failure and sin walk hand in hand. The Apostle Paul made this very clear when writing to the church at Corinth. He said that if one approaches the Lord's Supper without examining oneself and confessing sins, it will cause illnesses that cannot be healed. *"For this cause many are weak and sickly and many have died."* – 1 Corinthians 11:30

Internal repair of the heart, mind, and spirit is necessary for full healing. God says brokenness precedes something being repaired. David said,

*"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken spirit  
And a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise."* – Psalm 51:17

We must admit brokenness if we want God to mend us. This is not to say that all sickness is related to our sins, failures, or disobedience, but we cannot simply ignore the possibility of it. In our sickness, we need to examine our heart (thoughts), our spirit (attitudes), our minds (doubts) and our emotions (anxieties and fears). In the Psalms, David often related his physical afflictions to the state of his heart. The same is true of other Scriptures.

- *"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."* – Psalm 66:18
- *"Look on my affliction and my pain, And forgive all my sins."* – Psalm 25:16-18
- *"There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your anger, nor any health in my bones because of my sin."* – Psalm 38:3

- *“My iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able to look up; They are more than the hairs of my head, and my heart fails within me.”* – Psalm 40:11-13
- *“But a broken spirit dries the bones.”* – Proverbs 17:22
- *“The spirit of a man will sustain him in sickness, but who can bear a broken spirit?”* – Proverbs 18:14
- *“Therefore also will I make you sick in smiting you, in making you desolate because of your sins.”* – Micah 6:13
- *“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed.”* – James 5:16

I am not suggesting that sin directly causes all our afflictions, but it may be that a troubled mind stirs up sickness in the body. An anxious heart will feed an illness.

**Let me illustrate this.**

I was at a prayer retreat with some pastors. We had a prayer time in which we asked someone to sit in a chair in the middle of a circle of pastors and asked, "How can we pray for you?" We invited fellow pastors to sit in the chair and share their burdens. No one responded. None of the men wanted to sit in the hot seat. I was leading this prayer retreat, although another pastor was leading this session.

As I sat there, I felt the Lord ask, "Why don't you sit in the chair?" I thought, "No way! Not me. I don't enjoy being the center of attention." Nevertheless, I felt the Lord prompting me to be the guinea pig for that session. So, I eventually went up and sat in the chair. Bernie, my pastoral friend, said, "Dick, we just want to wait on the Lord. What do you perceive you're here for?"

I had several ailments that had been bothering me, so I told him about my aching back and my plantars wart that resisted all medications and wouldn't go away. He said, "Let's just wait on the Lord." Then, as we waited quietly, he said, "Dick, tell me the thoughts that are coming into your head right now, and what God is putting into your mind? Whatever it is. It may not make sense, but tell me what's there."

I explained about the plantars wart I had been battling for six months that wouldn't go away. Then Bernie said, "Dick, tell me what's hurting in your heart." I responded, "My dad had never expressed love for any of us in my family. I have never heard my dad say, 'I love you' or 'I'm proud of you.' It hurts that my dad doesn't love me. Now he's in a nursing home with dementia and I can't get through to him. I would love for my dad just to say, 'Dick, I love you and I'm proud of you, son.' But now I'll never see that because he's out of his mind." I started to cry and sob.

I was kicking myself for being so vulnerable. Then the Lord whispered to me, "You have a wound that's deeper than your arm, or your foot, or your back. I want to heal the wound in your heart."

That afternoon, I poured out my heart to God. The men gathered around me and poured out their hearts to God together with me. In those sessions, I forgave my dad all of his harshness, his bitterness, his anger and his unloving spirit. I asked the Lord to heal my heart and help me love my dad. I got up from that chair feeling great release. My back still hurt. My plantars wart still throbbed. But my heart was flying high.

After that retreat, several pastors came to me privately and said, "I needed to be in the chair because I too am angry at my dad. My dad never loved me either." I got an email later that week from a brother in Christ who said, "Dick, thank you for sharing your hurt. I needed that."

Something amazing happened, not right away, but something happened that day. A few weeks later, I went to Michigan to visit my dad. I asked the Lord to give me a sign that my dad truly loved me. Dad had dementia. He didn't recognize us anymore. When I arrived, my dad was in his wheelchair and bent over, drooling. As I approached, he looked up at me, and at first he didn't know who I was. But I knelt at his side and said, "Dad, it's me. I'm your son, Dick. I am Richard." At that moment, my dad's eyes cleared and his face lit up. He reached out to me, smiling. He pinched my cheek and gently shook it fondly and blabbered some unintelligible gibberish. My dad would have never done that when he was in his right mind. But God gave me a sign that day that daddy did love me. The next day when I got out of bed I suddenly realized my plantars wart was gone. I mean, it completely disappeared. There wasn't even a scar there. God healed my heart and my foot all in one sweep.

**Sometimes the healing needs to be done on the inside before it can happen on the outside. What's hurting in your heart?**



# Think About It

## **Chapter 4:**

### **Dealing With the Whole Man – Heart, Body, Soul, Spirit, Mind**

Do you ever ask God to heal your heart? Why? Why Not?

Do you ever ask God to heal your spirit? Why? Why Not?

Do you ever ask God to heal your mind? Why? Why Not?

Do you ever ask God to heal your soul? Why? Why Not?

What emotions do you think make sickness worse? Why?