



**Daily Devotional and
Group Study Guide**
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Discover Life When Life Needs Healing

You don't get invited to the Homecoming dance. Your marriage falls apart. You experience a slipped disc while playing golf. Your race becomes the brunt of a joke. Your child is bullied online. On and on it goes. Brokenness everywhere and people hurting: it is one of the issues we deal with on a daily basis. How do we deal with it? Is God still in the business of healing? Interestingly enough, we talk about "salvation" in the church as though it has only to do with our eternity; but "salvation" comes from the root word "salve" which is used for healing. The salvation God brings to the world is more than just for our eternal rest.

It is ironic that one of the main activities of Jesus, healing, would become such a point of contention in today's church. Some parts of Christendom argue that healing was something that ended with the disciples. Others argue that it must be done a certain way, usually involving specific prayers or the use of oil. For others it is a hopeful, perfunctory prayer said at a bedside or on Sunday mornings. Some churches hold "healing services" while others wouldn't even think of it. Other parts of Christendom try to give scientific explanations for why the healings in the Bible actually happened, stripping away the miraculous.

Sadly, all of that has sometimes covered up the reality that life needs healing and God has a role to play. People lead broken lives, physically, emotionally, spiritually, etc. And if we are to be like Jesus in any way at all, it means that we need to embrace the role of healing in our Christian walk. This series of studies and sermons is intended to open up our understanding and receptivity to the ways God not only heals, but has designed us to do so. Remember how scripture describes people bringing their loved ones to Jesus because of their hearing of his healing power. Maybe it is time we bring ourselves.

Discover Life– Week 1

When Life needs Emotional Healing

Mark 1:21-28

It is hard to make the jump sometimes between our current understanding of psychological problems and “demon possession.” Hollywood has distorted and sensationalized the role of demons so much that it doesn’t seem to have anything to do with modern life. But, in the ancient world, that was the word they used to describe people who were internally troubled and who acted contrary to their own best interests. Our language may be different, but the troubles are the same.

1. List the unique things about this story (what day of the week, etc.)
2. What is the significance of the man saying, “What do you want of *us*?” Do most of our problems come from single issues or an accumulation?
3. What does it mean that the demons recognize who Jesus is and the other people don’t?
4. Why does the story depict the demons shaking the man violently before exiting? What do you think that signifies?

5. What are the things that amazed the crowd? How is the healing tied together in their mind with the “new teaching?”

6. In your mind, how does the issue of authority fit in with healing? What role does authority play in our emotional healing?

7. How difficult is it to rid ourselves of emotional problems? In what ways does it “violently shake” us? In what ways are counselors partners with God in this kind of healing?

8. How does dysfunction react in the presence of healthy behavior? Give an example.

9. In what ways is Jesus’ command for the demons to “be quiet” related to the “voices” that often dominate and ruin our lives?

10. What is an emotional healing you have experienced that you give God the praise for?

Discover Life– Week 2
When life needs Physical Healing

Mark 1:29-39

What happens if you pray and your body doesn't heal? Does it mean that you don't have enough faith? Is all healing dependent upon our faithfulness or are other things going on? Some people are afraid to pray for healing because they don't want to be disappointed. Others assume there is a formula prayer that must be followed. Many Christians assume that it is all in the hands of science and medicine. What can we assume?

1. Are there any signs of "faithfulness" in the story about Peter's mother-in-law? Is there evidence she asked for healing? What does all that mean?
2. Does the story say that Jesus healed everyone? What does this story say about the centrality of healing in Jesus' ministry? What does the story say about Jesus own recovery after a long evening of healing?
3. Read John 5:1-15. Who takes the initiative in this physical healing? What does that say about God's care?
4. Some stories talk about people being healed by touching Jesus' his garment, having his hands laid upon them, Jesus rubbing mud on their eyes. Do all healings require a physical touch?

5. In some cases, Jesus says, "Your faith has made you well." How can faith contribute to healing? How do faith and medical treatment interact? What difference does it make if you see medical treatment as a gift from God?

6. What happens biologically if a person believes they can be healed? How important is the role of authority? What about hopefulness?

7. What role does our seeking play in getting healed? Is it ever important for the person to ask for help? What role does expectancy play?

8. What happens if we pray for physical healing and it doesn't happen? Read II Corinthians 12:7-10. What was Paul's experience? Are there reasons why physical healing might not happen? In what ways was healing brought?

9. We tend to be mostly aware of the physical problems that linger. How many physical issues have you experienced that wound up healing but you didn't give God credit? What is the evidence that God desires you to be well?

Discover Life– Week 3
When Life Needs Social Healing

Mark 1:40-45

Some of the greatest damage in life comes because of social ostracism. It can begin on the playground in grade school and be experienced in the board room or teacher's lounge. It can happen in family life. It can be at the hands of "mean girls" or taunting gangs. It can be a result of a label you have been assigned or a name you have been called. Few things hurt as much as being on the outside.

1. What was the life like for a person who had leprosy?
2. Why did Jesus tell the man to not tell anyone how his healing happened?
3. Why was Jesus not allowed to enter a town but had to stay out in the "lonely places?" (Hint – what happens if you touch someone who is declared unclean?) In what ways was he ostracized?
4. Why did Jesus tell the man to go show himself to the priest and make the offerings that were required? What if he hadn't done those things?

5. Read John 9. What does this story say about people's willingness to let others stay on the outside or put them there even for the sake of religion? Have you ever felt pressure to stay within a role at the risk of being ostracized?

6. In John 9, Jesus meets with the man later and helps him feel less alone. What happens? What do you think this meant to the man?

7. What is the role of the Church in helping people who feel ostracized become part of a community? In what ways has the Church played a part in ostracizing people? How easy is it for us to reach out to people who are just like us?

8. Who did Jesus associate with? What does that say about breaking the patterns of ostracism in our society? What if we sought out widows and orphans (and others) who are often forgotten?

9. Read Luke 14:12-14. What is God's attitude about the ostracized? How important is it to you to know that "God is with us always?" Are there times when we must stand alone (with God)?

Discover Life– Week 4
When Everyday Life Needs Healing

Mark 9:2-10

If there is a scourge we live with in our society it is ability to be bored and listless in the middle of so much. How is it that teens can live in any size community and still say, “There’s nothing to do!?” How is it that life can become so routine and ingrown that people will have affairs or put their lives at risk just to get a thrill? What is missing?

1. What happens in this story? What has been happening to the disciples before this event?
2. What is the value of this event for Jesus? What about the disciples? In what ways was this experience more than just “special effects?”
3. What is their reaction to the event? What happens that interrupts their ideas?
4. What prompts people to want to react like the disciples? How is this like people who want Sunday morning worship to always be an emotional experience or leave them emotionally pumped?

5. What does Jesus tell them to do or not do?

6. How does an event like this inform everyday life? What kinds of events have you had that you felt the presence of God? What lasting impact did it have?

7. Is it possible to live a listless life after experiencing something like this? Why are some people able to file these things away and just return to normal?

8. Do you believe God gives us glimpses of eternity so that we don't get lost in the mundane?

9. In what ways are these glimpses an act of healing for our lives?

10. In what ways are our lives "saved" and healed if we pay attention to the message given in this experience?