



Health

“Health” may be defined as “the condition of being sound (well, whole) in body, mind, soul and/or spirit.”¹ While these aspects of health are interconnected, the main subject of this lesson is physical health. What does the Bible say about physical health?

Health Ruined

God is the Creator and Source of life, wellness and wholeness. After he created the first humans, “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good” (*Genesis 1:31*). But man rebelled against God’s authority, resulting in a broken relationship with God and a “fallen” world (*Gen.3*). Thus poor health (sickness, disease, disability, etc.) and death became conditions of this fallen world.

Health Restored

God purposed to provide the way of restoration. Jesus Christ was sent into this world to save us from our fallen condition. He died for our sins so that we could be restored to God, and thus be restored to wholeness and true well-being.²

📖 “...he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace (*shalom*, well-being) was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.” (*Isaiah 53:5, NIV*)³



Prior to his death, Jesus had a tremendous ministry of physical healing.⁴ These physical healings demonstrated Jesus’ power and authority to restore people to wholeness and well-being in *all* aspects of health. Jesus gave his disciples the power and authority to heal, and he sent them out (*Luke 9:1-6*). Jesus’ disciples’ ministry of healing continued after his death and resurrection.⁵

Health Received

1. To receive the restoration that Jesus provides, what is needed? Consider Acts 14:8-10 and Romans 10:9-10.⁶
2. Do you think the Bible teaches that faith always results in physical healing *in this life*? (We will come back to this question.)⁷

¹ It’s not the intent of this definition to divide human beings into parts but rather to define health in terms of the whole being. Total health involves all aspects of the human’s nature, and all aspects are connected. However, a person might be physically healthy (in a relative sense) but spiritually unhealthy, and vice-versa.

² The most common Greek word for ‘save’ in the Bible is *sōzō* which can also mean ‘make well’ or ‘heal.’

³ Peter wrote, “[Jesus] himself bore our sins’ in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; ‘by his wounds you have been healed’” (*1 Peter 2:24, NIV*).

⁴ For example, see Matthew 4:23-24; 8:1-17; 9:1-8, 18-35; 12:10-15; 14:13-14, 34-36; 15:30-31; 20:29-34.

⁵ See Acts 3:1-16; 4:5-10; 5:12-16; 8:4-8; 9:32-35; 14:8-10; 28:7-9. Also see 1 Corinthians 12:4-11.

⁶ The connection between faith and physical healing is seen in Matthew 9:22, 28-29; 15:28; Mark 2:5; 5:34; 9:17-24; Mark 10:52; Luke 17:19; Acts 3:16; 14:8-10; James 5:14-16. We should not separate faith for physical healing from faith for *total* healing (i.e., salvation and restoration to God, which is necessary for wholeness and true well-being). Total healing is a process. When we are united with Christ through faith, we have a new life and new ‘heart,’ but we continue to live in our old, perishable bodies until we receive imperishable, immortal bodies when Christ returns.

⁷ This question might raise controversy since Christians have different beliefs concerning faith and physical healing.

Health Responsibility

God is the source of good health.⁸ Our first responsibility is to be united with God through faith in Jesus Christ. This will result in the full realization of wholeness and well-being in “the life to come.” However, we also have responsibilities concerning physical health in this present life.

3. Read Proverbs 3:1-8.⁹ What are we instructed to do? *Why* does it result in better health?¹⁰
4. Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. What do these verses teach, not only in their context (sexual immorality) but also applied more generally? How can they apply to health?
5. Read James 5:13-16. What is the general instruction in this passage?¹¹
6. What else can we do to improve health (for ourselves, our families, or societies)?
7. For some people, the pursuit of physical health is *extremely* important. Read 1 Timothy 4:7-9 and James 4:14. How do these verses provide proper balance?



Health Renewed & Realized

The good news of Jesus Christ promises renewal and restoration to wholeness and everlasting well-being. When will this be fully realized? As believers, the complete renewal and restoration of our physical health will be accomplished along with the renewal and restoration of all things. In the context of the final renewal of the “whole creation” (*Romans 8:19-22*), Paul wrote...

📖 “...we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.” (*Romans 8:23-25, NIV*)¹²

This relates to question 2. It’s good and proper to pray for physical healing, believing that God is faithful to his promises.¹³ God may heal miraculously or through physical means. God still heals! If physical healing does not occur, the believer still has the hope of complete renewal. And “our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us” (*Rm. 8:18*).

Reflection/Application

- Are you following God’s instructions for health? By God’s grace, make needed changes.
- Take time to share your need for healing, or the needs of loved ones. Pray for one another.

⁸ This statement applies to everyone regardless of their faith. By God’s common grace, nonbelievers may experience good physical health and also healing through physical means. But a relationship with God is needed for total health.

⁹ The context of these verses is Solomon’s teaching on ‘wisdom’ (*Proverbs 1:1-2*). ‘The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom’ (*9:10*). The word ‘peace’ in 3:2 is translated from *shalom*, which also means ‘well-being.’

¹⁰ Godly living is healthy. However, Christians may suffer physical hardships *because* of their faith. Nevertheless, following Christ is the only way to truly good health, which lasts forever! (*1 Peter 1:3-9; 4:12-19; 5:8-11*)

¹¹ The *general* instruction is ‘confess your sins’ and ‘pray.’ See ‘Let Us Pray’ under ‘James’ on the ICF website.

¹² Also see 1 Corinthians 15:50-54; 2 Corinthians 4:7-18; 5:1-5; Philippians 3:20-21 related to believers’ bodies.

¹³ Christians may have different beliefs about faith and physical healing because they have different understandings about what God has promised. Thus while some focus on strength of faith, the real issue may be the content of faith.