

# The Power of Self Examination

by Shane Idleman

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*Shane Idleman emphasizes the importance of self-examination in understanding healing and communion within the Christian faith.*

**Duration:** 43:11

**Scripture:** Matthew 8:16, James 5:14

**Topics:** "Healing And Faith", "Repentance And Humility"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of healing, exploring the biblical perspective on healing and the role of faith, humility, and self-examination. It delves into the connection between unconfessed sin and sickness, highlighting the need for repentance and submission to spiritual authority. The sermon also discusses the significance of communion, urging self-examination before partaking in remembrance of Christ's sacrifice.

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## Transcript

Let's get right into the message. And what I'm gonna do, we're actually, if you have your Bibles, we're in Matthew chapter eight, but we're not gonna get there quite this week either because I wanna set the stage as Jesus is going to talk about healing for many different verses. He's gonna heal this person and heal that person, heal that person.

And it's been on my heart to do a brief series on healing. What does it look like? You see this stuff on TV. You hear that God doesn't heal anymore.

We hear all this stuff. So what does the Bible say? Because both sides will say, after thoroughly exhausting the scriptures, we believe in this. Then the other side will say, after thoroughly exhausting the scriptures, we believe in this.

Well, who's right? I mean, we have two opposing views. So I kinda wanna tackle this, number one, and bring some clarity just from God's word, but understanding that I don't have the answers. I'm not saying, oh, let me tell you how it's really done.

Boom. We're just gonna look at scripture. We're gonna look at what God's word says, and we're gonna ask him, Lord, you show us, because this is a topic that is hard to understand.

I'm actually reading a book right now. It was given to me last week with K.P. Yohanan in Gospel for Asia, and rescuing these kids out of sex trafficking. And these guys buy them, give them like five cents a day, and house them and slave them to go out and beg for money, and they beat them up.

So they'll look even more, you know, what's the right word? They'll look more needy. So people give even more money. And we see these things, and we're like, how in the world does this happen? But he has a chapter on God healing people through these kids praying for people.

They just read the Bible. They say, look, the Bible says to pray, and they're seeing healing. So is he lying about all that? Is that just a chapter in there, and he's, oh, he's making all this stuff up? Or is it because we live in America, and we don't need God as bad? I don't know.

Think about that. So to say God doesn't heal anymore, and you go tell that to a missionary, they're gonna laugh in your face. But we don't see it much in America.

So where's the disconnect here? Well, let's try to get to that over the next few weeks. But the first thing that is vitally important before we get into the whole healing aspect is the power of self-examination, the power of self-examination. It is very healthy to examine yourself.

I hope that many of these sermons make us go home and examine ourselves. And I say often that before it hurts you, it hurts me at home, as I'm examining myself in the light of Scripture. And we're actually tying it into communion tonight.

It's our communion. Once a month, we have communion. We try to do it once a month.

We'd like to do it more often once we get more ushers. Okay, you see how all this is working? And somebody just set this up. So we're gonna tie in communion, because communion is vitally important.

And many times, we just gloss over it. Oh, yeah, here's communion. But I wanna tie in how this is a vital aspect of our Christian faith, and coming together, remembering Christ, remembering the cross, and in that remembrance, we come together.

We take communion. It's almost like a uniting of the body of Christ in this event. So I'm gonna try to tie in this self-examination, starting healing with communion.

So with that said, buckle up, sit down, and hold on, because here we go. We have to remember the key here, that healing is done, and I might not move from this spot very much, because I got a lot of notes. I wanna make sure I stay on track.

Healing is done through God's power, by his authority, by his spirit, and his time. You have to remember that. Healing, when God heals a person, or if he chooses to heal a person.

Oh, shoot, I actually forgot. I ordered a whole bunch of inserts from Johnny Erickson Tata's ministry. I've been talking with them about trying to get her out here to speak some time in the scheduling, and she has a great little pamphlet on sometimes why God doesn't heal, and how he's used her, and I wanna get that into the bulletin next week, because it's very important.

She has some great insight into this, but healing is done through God's power, by his authority, by his spirit, and his time, and that's why I have a problem sometimes with some of these guys on TV, that you would think that it's through their power, by their spirit, and their time, by how loud they can pray, and we

have to forget. No, it goes back to God and him alone. Now, most churches are prone to extremes.

How many of you have been coming here a while? You know how I like to show the different extremes, right? On this side, it's too extreme. On this side, it's too extreme. Well, there's no difference in this area of healing.

You've got this extreme, where people are gonna say, mm-mm, God doesn't do that anymore. Nope, I mean, you can pray for it. The Bible says to pray for it, and you've got some anointing oil, right? The Bible says anointing oil, but we really don't believe that stuff.

We don't teach that stuff. We really don't practice it, but if somebody needs healing, of course, we'll pray for them, and we're not stupid, Shane, come on, but it's really not gonna happen, but then you have the other side, right, where anybody should be healed. These guys, they're gonna blow on you.

They're gonna knock you over, and pooh, pooh, pooh, pooh, pooh. Everybody's healed, and God has to heal. God will heal everybody.

If he doesn't, your faith is little. You don't have enough faith. If you're sick, and if you're hurting financially, you don't have enough faith.

God wants you to be healthy, wealthy, and wise, and they promote that, and I don't see that being very biblical, because God sometimes brings us through challenging situations, and what happens, though, is I've seen this group. I know people in this group, is they'll take a scripture. Your faith has healed you.

Oh, see, there you go, and they'll make a whole doctrine out of scripture, but what you have to do, and I remember, I think it was Warren Wiersbe, or maybe J. Vernon McGee said, don't study, or don't even teach on Jesus's parables until you've read them for 20 years, and now, it's making a lot of sense now, because we can form doctrines over what I've experienced, or whatever I think, and look at this verse, but you have to read the entire scripture, the totality of what it says, because, you guys see this in the news, and I wanna be careful here, because I don't wanna poke fun. I do feel sorry for him and his family, but it fits in here, that came on Fox News, the Jamie Coates of snake salvation, the reality star, died because of a snake bite. These guys are, they hold the rattlesnake up, and they preach with it.

You haven't seen that? Some people are saying no. Well, because the verse in the Bible, and actually, it's a disputed text. Some manuscripts have it, some don't.

You'll take up serpents, and you will not die. You'll drink poison, and you will not die. The Bible says that, but it also says, do not tempt or test the God, your God.

Do not try him in these things. Jesus even said that when he was tempted in the wilderness. You shall not tempt the Lord thy God.

Those scriptures, in context, would mean like Paul, when he went to the island to minister to people, he picked up a whole bundle of wood, right, to make a fire, and the viper bit him, and the people said, oh, he's gonna be dead. He must be a murderer, and Paul just shook it off. Nothing happened, and they wanted to worship him as a God.

That's how these scriptures, in context, work. You can do God's will. You can go on the mission field.

You can get involved. You can do these things and know that no weapon formed against you will prosper. If you get bit, I mean, and we don't even understand.

Back then, when you walked somewhere, there were vipers. There were rats. You were in danger.

The lions, the beasts. We've got it so easy in our nation. I think we forget sometimes.

That's why we wanna read the Bible in the grammatical setting, the historical setting. You wanna get the whole context, and God's saying, listen, if you take up something like that, you're bitten by a viper. You drink poison accidentally.

As a child of God, in God's will, he will protect you, but it doesn't mean don't preach with a rattlesnake in your hand. How in the world would, I mean, that, to me, just doesn't, there's no common sense there. There's no wisdom, because he can just turn and bite, and as we know, that you can die from those things.

So that's one example of taking, why do you think Hollywood picked it up? I mean, come on, you think they're gonna show real gospel preaching on there? No, half of Hollywood would be convicted. The other half would throw their TV out the window. So they pick up these extreme things, so be careful on this issue.

Now, here is the dilemma with healing. What was normal in the New Testament is now considered bad and wrong and of the devil and false. See, that's what we have to forget about this side is, see, the dilemma this side has is what was really good in the New Testament now is bad.

I mean, you have to make a harder case to show that God doesn't do that anymore than just reading the Bible and allowing God to work through his spirit, and what you'll have is you'll have different teachers, right, you've got John MacArthur, and then you've got someone like the Vineyard Movement or Rick Joyner, John Wimber, these guys, these different leaders are on polar opposites. So you know what I like to do is read them both. I've got Strange Fire, Fry John MacArthur on my counter next to my bed, and I've got Jack Deere, surprised by the spirit next to my bed.

Let's see what these opposing forces say. The interesting thing about Jack Deere is he used to be a professor of Dallas Theological Seminary until he was surprised by the spirit of God and saw the gifts working. Now he left that whole thing and now wrote a book on it.

The John MacArthur comes, you know, these guys are kind of against each other. Then you have John Piper, you have C.J. Mahaney, you have great godly men of God, Wayne Grudem, and his book, Systematic Theology, spends a whole chapter on why and how the gifts are still valid today. But these people don't, so who's right? Somebody's gotta be right, right? Well, I think what happens, and we'll try to work through this, from reading them all and reading the Bible, reading them, reading the Bible, a couple things come to mind.

On this side, they see the stuff on TV and we're not gonna accept that. We're not gonna allow it, we're not gonna promote it, we're not gonna endorse it. And as a response, we kind of refrain from that.

We get to what they call the polar opposite side. We're not gonna do that. And then this other side, they don't refrain.

If it's odd, it's God, all weird behavior is excused and the Holy Spirit's moving and don't you see this and that and everybody's, and that's not God either. So on the one hand, I think one reason why many people are afraid of the power of the Holy Spirit, and this will be a stepping on toes sermon, I'm getting comfortable with doing that. Many times, and I'm saying this in love, I'm not saying this arrogantly because I need God every day, I need the Spirit's power.

I pray before I even walk up here, Lord, you need to speak through me because this bumbling idiot, who barely graduated high school, cannot do this unless you empower me. The reason a lot of times is they doubt the power of the Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Holy Spirit is because they've never experienced it. The majority of the time, it's because they've never experienced it.

Think about it. If you submit, surrender, humble yourself, you're filled with the Spirit of God and God gives you this prophetic word of utterance that you're able to speak into somebody's life, you see somebody actually healed and tongues, what is that? And this prayer language is you're worshipping God. And then you read the Bible, go, yeah, absolutely.

I've experienced, I agree with it. And then you have somebody else who says, they haven't seen those things. They've been raised in a denominational setting that won't allow for those things.

They've been reading books and theological studies by those professors. They've been taught this by their fathers. Who in their right mind's gonna say, could we have been wrong? So what you've never experienced, we have to take and remove it out of the Bible.

We have to make allowances for what we've never experienced. But then the other side that just says, everybody slain in the Spirit and fallen over, we gotta be careful with these things. You know, I don't gravitate toward that side either because I don't see that in the biblical text.

I see when God moves mightily and it revives a place and revives a church, people, it's not pretty. People are weeping. I mean, I've got Whitefield's journals of George Whitefield, The Great Awakening, Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley, David Brainer, who spent time with the American Indians before the American Revolution, all these things.

These guys, when God moves, sometimes it's not pretty. You can't, you know, somebody just doesn't sit there in a nice little box. They fall down under the presence of God and things happen and sometimes they're just shaking because they're so convicted of their sin.

So I'm not discounting that either. But that's why you'll see a great divide. If somebody's experienced healing and they've experienced the power of the Spirit in their life, then they're gonna believe that.

Does that make sense? If they haven't experienced those things, then they're probably not gonna believe it. Now, granted, there are people who, when you get to 1 Corinthians, tongues, word of knowledge, word of wisdom, I don't know what these things, Shane, are. You know, I haven't experienced them, but I'm open to them because I think the Bible still teaches them.

That's a healthy group, too. That's a good spot to be. And I'm not a big proponent of tongues, you know, in church and tongues and this, and hopefully we'll get to a teaching of it at some point because the Bible talks a lot about it.

And we shouldn't be scared of what the Bible talks about. And if it's done in context, in biblical context, these things are not bad, they're good. If they're done in context and how Paul explains them to be done.

And you don't have to feel not spiritual that you don't receive this or this happens. I believe it's as a person empties themselves and they're filled with the Spirit of God, that God will begin to give them giftings according to 1 Corinthians 12, 13, 14. You'd wanna look at all three of those chapters, again, in context.

But if somebody doesn't speak in tongues, they're no less spiritual than the person who does. I mean, many of my heroes from D.L. Moody and Charles Spurgeon and the Puritans and these guys, a lot of those, they never said that they received any type of gifting like that. And y'all have to wonder too, is it more of a gifting for the mission field? Or is it more of a gifting for somebody's own devotional prayer life and how God can move their heart and pray with the Spirit? So hopefully I'm gonna try to unpack all those things.

And I went on a big rabbit trail that I promised myself I wasn't gonna go on. So I'm still here on this first point. But I wanted to show you the difference between these two sides.

And you read, you know, Jack Deere, who was Dallas Theological Seminary, didn't believe in any of the gifts. He actually used to mock the gifts. And I put a couple of his quotes in their bulletin.

He said, I love to say that I live by the Word of God alone, not by my feelings. I preach so many sermons on this theme that I come to regard feelings and the Word of God as mutual enemies. And believe it or not, that's very true of many people I know.

Many people I know that go to dead ritualistic churches, just the Word of God alone. They pound the Word of God. Feelings are divorced from the Word of God.

And go back and listen to the last few messages each Saturday, you'll see that I do not believe that. That our feelings and the Word of God are together. Because as I read the Word of God, I feel the Word of God.

The Holy Spirit's crying, Abba, Father. He's illuminating the text. I mean, if the Holy Spirit wrote the Scripture, surely, surely we need to ask for his guidance as well and his instruction as well as we read the Bible.

So that's how that works. And also I like this quote, too much of the church today has more confidence in Satan's ability to deceive than in God's ability to speak to us and lead us. That, this is what happens on the other side too.

We're so worried about the devil deceiving that we do not allow God to speak and lead us. And if you're a child of God living in his Word, praying, humility, seeking discernment, doing all the things, worshiping him, you can't be led astray. The only way you can be led astray is to open yourself up to wrong doctrine, false teaching.

Well, Shane, aren't they gonna do that? No, if you're into the right teaching and you're listening to the right people and you're praying and you're worshiping God, you're using discernment. A lot of people that are led astray aren't open to discernment. They think if you use discernment, you're quenching and grieving the Spirit of God.

But the Bible says, discern the spirits, test all things. So if somebody comes up and says, pastor, I've got a word of knowledge for you, and say, great, let's see if it comes to pass. I'm gonna test it.

I don't know you, I don't know your character. That's it, I'm not gonna go do something because of it. He's not gonna lead me astray.

He won't lead you astray either if we're grounded and anchored in the Word. And I've seen a lot of people, I've seen people go from Christianity to Mormonism. I've seen people go from Christianity to cults.

I've seen people go from Christianity to all these weird and extreme things on YouTube and all this stuff that's going on, you gotta watch out, and the conspiracy, all these things. And in every single case, it's because they're not grounded in their Word, they're not humble, they're not broken, they're not teachable, they're very prideful, they're very arrogant, and they don't have a life of prayer and worship. When you have all of that, that is a child of God on fire for God, filled with the Spirit of God.

The devil can't mislead that person unless that person begins to unhook the anchor. You know, anchor gets stuck in the lake, you just cut that anchor loose, let that boat drift. So if you move away from the anchor, you can be, and I can be, led astray.

Now let's get into the actual message. The power of self-examination. The power of self-examination.

A few weeks back, I talked about, or actually a few months back, well, Matthew 7, so the fruit of authentic faith, and we talked about people being saved. It's good to check yourself at the door, basically, and see, okay, do I have the fruit of genuine conversion? So I put the link in there. You can go on our website and click the fruit of genuine faith, or actually search it.

And I'm not talking about that tonight, because I already talked about that exhaustively. Do you truly have genuine fruit? If you were arrested for being a Christian, is there enough evidence to convict you? Do you have a love for God, a love for His word, sincere humility, gentleness, kindness, the fruit of the Spirit, do you have these things? Or don't you? So Paul says examine yourself. Do you not know yourself? Is Jesus Christ in you? And I've come to find out, people know if they have Christ and they know if they don't.

And it's kind of alarming when they say, I think so, I hope so, I mean, I'm a good person. What are you arresting in your good works? And I remember a few years ago now, I gave a message at a church in Lancaster on a Sunday morning, both services. And afterwards, somebody got upset at me.

I know it's hard to believe, but it does happen. And he went home, he told his wife, and this is what I was talking about. I was talking about the fruit of genuine faith.

The Bible talks about He who does His commandments. You know, you can see it. Does a person have fruit or don't they have fruit? And he got mad, he said, I don't like that guy telling me that I'm not a Christian.

The funny thing was, I never mentioned that. I just went through what the Bible says is the fruit of genuine faith. So he could see, I don't have that fruit.

I'm not a Christian. But what a person needs to do instead of getting upset is there's a word called repentance. You say, ah, that's what I need, Lord, I repent.

I need that fruit. Lord, I accept Your Son on the cross. So I'm not talking about self-examination in that context.

I'm talking about self-examination in the context of saints. As Christians, we need self-examination. Do you know it's very important sometimes when you sit down and you read the Word of God that you don't sit there like that Pharisee who said, oh God, I'm so glad that I'm not like that other person over there.

I give and I do all these things. Aren't I so spiritual? Don't you love me so much? No, you need self-examination to examine the heart. So it's very important that we examine ourselves.

Now, here's the part of the sermon I wanna get to, and this is where I wanna make sure I have a big disclaimer in here, but we can't avoid talking about this because it is crucial. Unconfessed sin can lead to sickness. Okay, I'm just gonna get this out of the way first, and the next few weeks I can say, oh, I talked about that before.

Unconfessed sin can lead to sickness. Throughout the Old Testament, we saw this all the time. Moses, the people disobeyed.

David, when he disobeyed the Lord. Gehazi, when he was a servant of Elisha, and they let Naaman go after curing him, and this Gehazi rode after him and said, oh, I'm not gonna tell my master. I'm gonna take his gold and silver and his things, and my master will never know.

But Elisha knew. He said, did my heart not go with you when you went to get those things? And then he, leprous, he turned into a leper, and he got leprosy. And we see counts throughout the Bible of unconfessed sin can lead to sickness.

But, and here's my disclaimer, often, that's not the case, or we'd all be sick. That's just, I'm gonna shoot you straight. So those guys who say, oh, you must have some unconfessed sin.

Well, we would all be sick, wouldn't we? I mean, I think I've got some pride I need to go repent of tomorrow morning. Look how big our 4 p.m. service is. Nobody said we would make it.

Ha, ha, ha. Not good. Now God's gonna say, next week, you're gonna have about half this.

You see how that works? But I like that, because if people said, oh, that'll never happen, and I'm like, oh, I'm so excited. So I'm trying to find the balance there between thanking God and being prideful. So, open confession.

Why am I not sick, then? Or why am I, you know, why, so we have to be careful not to say it's always tied to unconfessed sin. However, as I'm gonna show you, the Bible talks a lot about how our spiritual health can affect our physical health. For that, I'm gonna have you turn to James 5 if you get a chance.

That's a good way to drink my water. It's a big water, huh, Shaley? It's because I'm thirsty. Two services.

So James 5. But here's what happens. When I talk about this issue, most people say, no, I'm good, I'm good. Right, most of you would say, I'm good.

But, without spending time in the presence of God, it's not until after genuine reflection takes place that our attitudes are changed. Most people are gonna say, no, I'm good, I'm good. There's nothing wrong here.

Well, why don't you go sit in prayer for an hour? I bet you'll come out with a list of things that need to be worked on. So be careful there. Don't just assume, oh, I'm good.

Take time and examine yourself. God loves that. Examine yourself.

Lord, is there anything, is there anything wrong with me? Is there anything I'm doing wrong that I've sinned in these areas, Lord? Would you help me? This is a good place to start because certain habits and toxic thoughts can stick with us. And they'll hurt us in this area. So the first step, heart examination.

James 5, 13. Now listen, he's talking about, you know, you guys are gonna have to stay for the 5.30, get this whole sermon. James 5, verse 13.

Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Don't go run to the bank. Don't go run to a physician.

Don't go run to gossip. If anybody, if you're in trouble tonight, pray. If you're in trouble tonight, pray.

Pray. God loves to hear the prayers of his children. Not say, oh, I think \$1,000 can fix that.

I'll charge. No, pray. We have a whole prayer team back in that corner that's gonna meet you to pray.

Is anyone sick among you? Well, let's keep reading. Let me start over. Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray.

Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let them call for 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. Should we just erase it out of the Bible? I mean, that's pretty explicit.

I'm thinking, why don't we do that more often? We've got elders here. Every single Saturday, we've got this. Every single Saturday, oil.

Why does nobody want prayer? And we wonder why things are not changing. Now, I'm gonna go through this. Hopefully, I didn't look at too many commentaries because they're so divided on this.

It's not funny. I hope that, let me just pray right now too on this. Lord, I pray that you would help us with this topic.

Lord, open the eyes of our understanding through the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Lord, that you would give us wisdom and discernment on how you can heal your people and guide your people. And we ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well. The Lord will raise them up. Here we go.

If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. I don't know, I don't have a seminary education, but that sentence says, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.

The prayer of a righteous man availeth much. I better read it in what we have there. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

So just that chunk there makes me wanna pray. I don't know about you. But what's he talking about there? Prayer is the focal point.

Prayer is the focal point. And then he ends with the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. And on this point, we need to remember that holiness and prayer are married.

The reason people don't pray well is they don't live well. Prayer and holiness is a powerful weapon. In the hands of a holy person.

So this issue of prayer and holiness. But then, I believe that there is humility involved. Look at what he says.

If anyone is sick among you, call for help. Call for help. I know people in this church who don't want me to put their name on the prayer chain.

And I know that they need some serious prayer. Even me too, when I get sick, I'm like, I don't know. I got it, I got it, I got it, Morgan, I got it.

Don't do that. Why? Pride, I think. Most of the time, right, pride.

So I think there's a, as you were praying, there's a step of humility saying, Lord, I need help. Lord, would you help me? I don't care if, I'm gonna make a fool of myself. If I said prayer up at this altar during worship, God's gonna move, we should clear our seats.

We should be up here. I don't care who's looking. Lord, I'm calling out for help.

I'm calling out for you. Would you help me? And many of us don't like to do that. I don't know, I'm good, I've been, I don't want that.

So I think there's a step of humility involved here. Look, that's what the Bible says. Call on them, say, listen, I need help.

And then pray with the elders. Now here's the thing that's tricky. And commentaries are divided all over the place on this, whether you read John MacArthur or Jack Deere or John Piper or Wayne Grudem or R.C. Sproul or Charles Hodge or John Calvin.

Lot of different issues here. But here's the main thing. Elders don't have supernatural power, okay? People say, Shane, if you would just pray for me, I know things could change.

No, no, no, no, please. There, the cross. That's who you need to seek.

Don't think somebody on TV or you have to go somewhere, you have the power of God in your life. But there is a dynamic taking place that we can't overlook. I think, I don't mean to paraphrase, we've got prayer, we've got humility.

I think it's a submission to spiritual authority. Saying, listen, you guys are spiritually over me as the congregation. I need you to pray for me and have that spiritual authority investing into my life and praying for me.

And I think God honors that. Because if you watch this, you're praying, you're calling for help. What, with the elders, I mean, if you pray with an elder, you're gonna get healed.

If you don't, you're not. And there's no super, you know, there's not this, you know, this special force that comes out. In K.P. O'Hannon's book, little kids were praying for people and cancerous tumors, people

were beginning to walk and get out from little kids.

No theological background. Jesus said, and I believe it and I pray. So it's a step of humility.

And it's part of the submission, the humility factor, saying, okay, you are over, you are my spiritual covering in this church, if you call this church home, and you're submitting to that spiritual authority. And a lot of people don't like spiritual authority. I don't even like to use that word.

They don't even like, they don't wanna use the word membership or spiritual, they don't want anybody telling them what to do. Well, that's a hindrance to healing, and that's a hindrance to God answering your prayers. We all submit to somebody.

We should, and if you don't, there's a problem with that. I have an elder board, and I have a board over this church. I can't even vote on some things that have to do with compensation.

I can't even touch it, I can't even vote on it. It's good, it's healthy. The elder board, what are we doing this for? Why do we need, there's accountability there.

There's not this lone ranger doing whatever he wants because a lone ranger gets prideful, and then a prideful person is no longer directed by God. And when you're no longer directed by God, you get into trouble. And any time we talk about, man, let's consider maybe membership, or let's call it a different word, I'm not signing nothing.

Well, I can relate, because I feel that way. I don't like membership either. I came from Calvary Chapel, so you know there's no membership.

However, I'm learning that we need to know who calls Westside Christian Fellowship home and who does it. Who do we help with benevolence? Where do we invest our time with? Are they coming here on Saturday and going somewhere else Sunday morning? Who calls their home church? Members, family, core. And then knowing that they sit underneath our spiritual covering.

And we don't look at it as authority, we look at it as submission to God in what they call servant leadership. We want to serve you by leading. Well, who are those people? I have no idea.

Why? Because we have no membership roster. We have nothing. So that's why these things are important, I think.

So I believe that there's a humility factor in submitting to those over us. What about the oil? Now, this is interesting because there's really no answer. I mean, of course we know that the oil was precious, the oil was used in the Bible for the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the oil was costly, the oil was a source of fuel.

But why does it say go and pray with oil? Well, again, in our American context, this is very easy to get. Biblical context, very difficult to get. It's expensive.

Remember the lady who broke the little thing of oil and she said, you just wasted a year's pay. So I think we're going, we're saying, Lord, I'm humbling myself, I'm going, I'm bringing something that costs me something, that costs the church something, Lord. David said, I won't even give to the Lord anything that has not cost me something.

So there's a cost involved. The Bible says the anointing, the Holy Spirit heals, and we anoint that person with oil. We're praying, Lord, and you get to heaven and say, well, Shane, this really doesn't apply anymore.

Well, I don't know, I'm acting as if it does. See, I'd rather err on that side going, God, I'm sorry, I'm so stupid not to realize that this doesn't apply anymore. But I don't understand the dynamic.

I can't say, well, according to the theological background of oil, the medicinal purposes will do this if you put it here and you'll feel a lot better and this is how it worked. I don't know. All I know is the oil represents the power and the anointing, the uncture of the Holy Spirit throughout the Old Testament.

Let the oil flow. Remember, they went to anoint King David, King, and Jesse would pour the oil. Leaven kid, the oil's not flowing, the oil's not flowing.

Something's not right here. Do you have another son? Yes, he's out in the field. Well, go grab him.

And as soon as he came in, the oil flowed. The anointing of God, pouring that oil upon somebody. And it might not just be a little dab, it might be how they did it back then.

So I'm just opening up saying, I don't know exactly how the oil works. All I know is that God says something to do and we better do it. And it might represent, see, it's not what's in here, it's what it represents.

You realize that? If you were to pray to God and get healed and you're like this and you're praying and you're worshiping, this isn't healing me, this is the posture of my heart. See, this is just reflecting what's going on in the heart. On my knees and raising my hands doesn't heal me, but the submission to God saying, Lord, I need you, that's what does.

That's the key that opens that door. So you see how this all works now, right? It's all about praying and humility and submission to God. And of course, with oil, there's a lot of medicinal purposes, healing balms and things that they have at a health food store that I truly believe in.

I've seen elderberry and echinacea and probiotics and all these things kill disease on skin and rashes and things. So I know that oil has a very good healing property as well. So that could be part of this whole thing.

Verse 17, actually, I haven't even got there yet. Here's what else has happened, faith is exercised. So we see that praying, we see the humility.

Now it says the prayer of faith. See, and this is the scripture where these guys get a little off. They say, see, you're just not healed because you lack faith.

You just lack faith. They pull the scripture out. But faith is exercised as part of our healing as well.

When we believe God for something, God, I believe you're gonna save me. God, I believe you're gonna heal me. We exercise that faith because the Bible says without faith, it's impossible to please God.

So what is faith? Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. So healing must involve some level of faith. I mean, if we're walking back there going, oh, I'll go have them pray for me, but what's the point? I've had this for 20 years.

Sure, I'll try it. He said it. It's not gonna work.

Well, you're probably right because you have to exercise a praying heart of faith. But my heart also says, Lord, even if you don't heal me, I'm gonna serve you. Even if you don't deliver me, I'm gonna serve you.

It's like the three boys caught in the fiery furnace, right? What do they say? Our Lord will deliver us from the fiery furnace. But even if he doesn't, we will not bow to you, King. That's healthy.

That's a good balance. Even if he doesn't heal me, I'm not gonna bow to negativity. I'm not gonna bow to complaining.

I'm not gonna do all these things. I'm gonna still seek you, God. Yet I have the faith, Lord, that you will heal me.

But Lord, I also have unbelief. You still help my unbelief. Nobody in this room has perfect faith.

Do we? I hope not, because then you need to repent of pride. But that's how this works. Sickness related to sin.

On this point, listen to this verse in Isaiah. The power of confession. Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short that he cannot save, nor is ear too dull to hear.

But your iniquities have separated you from God and your sins have hid his face from you so that he will not hear. How much clearer can we get than that? God's ear is not heavy, his hand is not short that he will not save, but our sins and our iniquities have hid his face from us so that he won't even hear us. God, why don't you hear my prayer? I want to.

Why don't you hear my prayer? Because your sins, your iniquity, your unconfessed bitterness and your attitude and all these things, you keep hanging on to, confess those things, and then I will be able to hear you. No, no, no, no, I'm not gonna do that. That's a scriptural truth, that God will not hear the prayers of his people with unconfessed sin in their lives.

But it's an oxymoron, or there's a double-edged sword, because he will hear the prayers of his people with unconfessed sin if they repent. Say, Lord, I repent, I've got sin in my heart, I need you. I ask that you would deliver me and heal me of this, Lord.

Help my unbelief, Lord, I do believe in you, but help my unbelief. So it's this pride and this arrogance. How often do we run to the pharmacy, a physician, or psychologist when we need to run to him? I've got quotes in here I don't have time to read, but I went on Psychology Today, I know it's gonna surprise some people.

Trust me, I don't go there too often. But even they say that holding on to guilt and unforgiveness will lead to sickness. If people could just learn to say, I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

They said our counseling offices would be down to half because of people carrying around all this guilt. Then the prayer of a righteous person in right standing before God because of repentance is powerful and effective. So here's what he ends with, the prayer of a righteous person in right standing with God is powerful and effective.

So here's the formula, this is only halfway through the sermon, I'll get to the rest hopefully tonight. Prayer, humility, submission, there's a cost, there's faith, there's repentance, and then right standing before God

and God can open the door of healing. Does he always? Of course not.

But how often do we not put these things on our side? So with that said, the prayer team's gonna be available at the end of this service, but I wanna really just now jump to the closing of communion and what we're gonna do is we're gonna go into a time of communion. And actually Paul says to the church in Corinth, therefore whoever eats of this bread or drinks of this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner. Did you catch that? I wonder how many times people just gloss over these scriptures, ah, it's no big deal.

No, it's very big deal. Whoever drinks of this cup or eats of the bread in an unworthy manner of unconfessed sin, of coming in the wrong attitude, the wrong manner, is guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup, for he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

For this reason, many are weak and sick among you and many have died. I don't know, does that make a connection there between unconfessed sin? For this reason, many people are weak and sick among you and many have fallen asleep, are dead, because we don't examine ourselves in light of taking communion. See, we have to realize, we come into the presence of a holy, righteous God, a God that should be feared in our nation, a God that should be feared in our churches.

We come in here sometimes as if we're gonna do God a favor, it's no big deal, and we come in and we wonder why he's not moving, why do I feel this disconnect? Listen, guys, self-examination. Examine our hearts. Is there pride that needs to be repented of? Is there sexual sin? Is there things that we need to repent of before we can take communion? Now, the context is, and I don't have time of coming in, the rich and the poor, and they're drinking all the wine and eating all the food, regardless, what an unworthy manner before God.

How important is that? And then he says, Jesus said this, when you do this, take it and eat in remembrance of me. Do this in remembrance of me, and as I was closing on that point in the sermon, I was thinking of the power of remembering. No wonder Jesus said remember.

We have, you know there's power in remembering. Remember, those of you have older kids that are not acting very good, remember when they were tiny, little, one, two years old, the little kids running up, they couldn't do anything wrong, you just held them, you loved them, and then oh, I remember those days. It helps to soften your heart now if marriages that were on the brink of divorce would just remember when they first fell in love, remember when they were kind to each other, remember when they loved each other, remember when you could feel that joy in the house, if you would just remember and go back to that, that marriage would be restored, and then if people who stop fighting God, if they remember the goodness of God, if they would stop fighting with Him, remember how good God was that the relationship with Him would be restored, and then Christ says, remember me, you've left your first love, remember, I'm the guy who died on the cross for you, you remember all that sin that you don't have to carry around, I've absorbed it on the cross, let it go, remember me, remember the cross.

See, if we remembered those things, tears would start to fall, we could come up and take communion, because Christ died for me, a sinner on my way to hell. That's why He says remember, that's why He says remember, because without Him saying remember what I did, we'll just come up here and as if, it's no big deal, and we'll go back to our seats, and He didn't die for a comfortable church, He died to save His church, and we need to remember that.

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