

Blocked Arteries

This week's essay on healing was interesting and I agree with the points made in it regarding why some people are not healed. It made me think about a topic we have discussed in the past and that is "half-hearted" prayers. True, God heals Who He desires to heal, but He does not hear the wishy-washy prayers lifted skyward if there is a disconnect between Him and the believer, blocking the flow if you will.

Matthew 17:20- "And Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief. For truly I say to you, if you have faith as a *tiny* mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, 'Remove from here,' and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you."

Mark 4:40- "And He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? Why do you not have faith?"

Why do we lack faith? Is it due to a heart that does not know God? Is there something blocking the spiritual flow? Doubt maybe?

James 1:6-7- “But let him ask in faith, not doubting at all because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven by the wind and tossed *to and fro*. Do not let that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord.”

Is it more of a heart problem than people think? Joann is a Cardiac nurse and can confirm how many folks show up in the hospital with clogged arteries.

Disrupting the life-giving blood flow to the heart can lead to a six-foot hole in the ground. Thankfully, there are numerous procedures that can remove the plaque that can build up in the arteries. Heart catheterization, Angioplasty and Atherectomy just to name a few. All designed to open clogged arteries and vessels. Vessels? Aren't we vessels too?

One of the most encouraging things I find in sharing each week is *not knowing* what is going to be shared until the writing is over. God, for some reason, types out the message according to His will. Trusting in Him to do so is the motivation that helps me wake up the roosters at 5 AM...

This past week, Niecey Miles sent a text asking if I would review a couple of lessons she had written and give her my thoughts on them. Humbled by her

request, she sent them in an email. It was evident her writings were Spiritually inspired. We just read one of them and it stressed our focus on the condition of the heart. Well done, Niecey, keep following God's lead.

When God's Holy Spirit moves us to share His words, they will flow. Sharing scriptures and painting a picture along with them gives the reader the mental images of how the scriptures can apply to daily living, addressing issues, and spiritual growth.

So how does God use someone to share His word? Pretty much anyway He wants to, but He will favor the brokenhearted, the humble, and the lowly in spirit. She has listed several of these scriptures in her writing. We must be an open vessel to receive what God desires to put in us. When we do things ourselves, it usually fails.

John 15:5- "I am the vine, and you are the branches. The one who is dwelling in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; because apart from Me you can do nothing."

Jesus Himself, reiterated the words from Isaiah 61:1-3. I may seem to be beating a dead horse on the brokenhearted and contrite spirit topic, but it is critical in coming to know the full will of God for our lives. A humble heart is open to correction, direction, and guidance from above. It is open to seeking Him as a child seeks their parent.

Luke 4:17-18- “And there was given Him the book of the prophet Isaiah; and when He had unrolled the scroll, He found the place where it was written, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; for this reason, He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal those who are brokenhearted, to proclaim pardon to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to send forth in deliverance those who have been crushed,”

A prideful or arrogant heart has no room for God. A blocked vessel will not know God fully and cannot function properly just as a physical heart cannot function if it has blocked arteries. The humble and lowly become servants of the Most High God.

Philippians 2:7-9- “But emptied Himself, *and* was made in *the* likeness of men, *and* took the form of a servant; And being found in *the* manner of man, He

humbled Himself, *and* became obedient unto death, even *the* death of *the* cross. Therefore, God has also highly exalted Him and bestowed upon Him a name which *is* above every name;”

God will lift up those of a lowly, meek, and humble spirit for His purpose.

Job 22:29- “When they cast you down, then you shall say, ‘A lifting up shall come!’ And He shall save the humble person.”

Psalm 10:17- “LORD, You have heard the desire of the humble; You will prepare their heart, You will cause Your ear to hear,”

Psalm 147:6- “The LORD lifts up the meek; He casts the wicked down to the ground.”

Luke 1:51-52- “He has worked strength with His arm; He has scattered the haughty in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down rulers from thrones, and has exalted the lowly.”

We have put great emphasis on the contrite spirit and the broken hearted, but it is for a reason. God does not begin with a human that thinks they are perfect. He wants the lowly and foolish among us.

1 Corinthians 1:26-29- “For you see your calling, brethren, that *there are* not many who are wise according to the flesh, not many who are powerful, not many who are high-born *among you*. Rather, God has chosen the foolish things of the world, so that He might put to shame those who are wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world so that He might put to shame the strong things. And the low-born of the world, and the despised has God chosen—*even* the things that are counted as nothing—in order that He might bring to nothing the things that are; So that no flesh might glory in His presence.”

He would rather have the broken pieces to put together a thing of beauty His way. He is the potter, and we are the clay.

Isaiah 64:8- “But now, O LORD, You *are* our Father; we *are* the clay, and You *are* our potter; and we all *are* the work of Your hand.”

Throughout the Bible we read how God used the lowly and raised them up His way and for His purpose. Many of the prophets in the Bible referred to themselves as “humble servants.” Abraham, David, Elisha, Isaiah, Daniel, and Mary the Mother of Jesus just to name a few. All had humble beginning but were raised up in God’s way. We also read that so many of those puffed up were brought low because of their pride and arrogance.

Proverbs 16:18-19- “Pride *goes* before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. *It is better to be* of a humble spirit with the lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud.”

Proverbs 29:22-23- “An angry man stirs up strife, and a furious man abounds in transgression. A man’s pride shall bring him low, but honor shall uphold the humble in spirit.”

The prideful person cannot receive from God as those who are humble in spirit.

Job 5:10-14- “Who gives rain upon the earth and sends waters upon the field, To set on high those who are low, so that those who mourn may be lifted up *to*

safety; He frustrates the devising of the crafty, so that their hands cannot achieve prosperity. *He* takes the wise in their own craftiness; and the schemes of the cunning are carried headlong upon them.”

1 Timothy 6:3-6- “If anyone teaches any different doctrine, and does not adhere to sound words, *even those* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine *that is* according to godliness, He is proud and knows nothing. Rather, he has a morbid attraction to questions and disputes over words, from which come envy, arguments, blasphemy, wicked suspicions, Vain reasonings of men who have been corrupted in *their* minds and *are* destitute of the truth—*men* who believe that gain is godliness. From such withdraw *yourself*. But godliness with contentment is great gain.”

Pride is blinding to those who profess to follow Jesus Christ. Self-elevation is a norm these days. So many people think the way to the top is over the backs of those about them, contrary to what God instructs us in His word. Pride is the plaque that clogs our spiritual arteries. It stops the flow of God’s Holy Spirit to our hearts.

1 Thessalonians 5:19- “Quench not the Spirit.”

Pride and being puffed up will do just that. But we have come to live by faith.

Habakkuk 2:4- “Behold, his soul is puffed up, *and* is not upright; but the just shall live by his faith.”

Overcoming the sin of pride can be difficult as so very often those affected do not realize they are full of themselves. God will use trials to try and break through a prideful heart. Trials may increase in intensity if we do not learn from one storm to the next. Being humble and of a contrite spirit is foundational for fulfilling our primary roles as a servant.

Matthew 23:11-12- “But the greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever will exalt himself shall be humbled; and whoever will humble himself shall be exalted.”

We can rejoice that these things have not been hidden from us.

Matthew 11:25-26- “At that time Jesus answered and said, “I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the

wise and intelligent, and have revealed them to babes. Yes, Father, for it was well pleasing in Your sight *to do this.*”

It is our inward self that God knows best. The healthy condition of our heart will keep us flowing receiving direction from God’s Holy Spirit.

1 Peter 3:4- “But *let your adornment* be the inward person of the heart, *manifested* in the incorruptible *jewel* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is of great value in God’s sight.”

Keeping our hearts right before God is as important as keeping our physical hearts healthy. A good diet and exercise program of Commandment keeping (John 14:15), increasing our faith by reading and studying His word (Romans 10:17) every day, and a faithful prayer life (1 Thessalonians 5:17) is the best way to avoid any clogged arteries. God can use those with a healthy heart for His purpose. We need not be concerned if our human heart stops if we are in right standing with Our Creator. Amen.

BL-01/27/24

