

Chapter 10

God's Healings

*"I am the Lord who heals you."
Exodus 15:26*

Little Steve's Eye

Jeremiah 32:17

Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.

My youngest brother, Steve, one day walked in front of Dave as he was playing baseball. Dave swung the bat full force just as Steve wandered in front of him. The bat hit Steve in the eye. That horrible event makes me tremble even as I write about it. The scream, the horror, the terror in mom and dad as mom held Steve's head on her lap and his eyeball in the palm of her hand to keep it from dangling out. Dad raced through traffic lights laying on the horn all the way to the hospital.

The doctor was able to stitch his eye back in place and hoped for the best. They wouldn't know for weeks whether he would lose his eyesight. Some weeks later Steve walked behind someone on the swing and was hit in the eye again. This was while his eye was healing and it reopened the wound! More excitement! We had another rush to the hospital. This time however it resulted in a praise session around the dinner table as the doctor had told Mom that there had been a pocket of blood formed behind the eye and the collision with the swing had probably saved his eyesight!! What a lesson that *"all things work together for the good of those who love God."*

A Teen Calling for the Elders

James 5:14

Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up.

I had the issue of healing come to me rather abruptly when I was a teenager. I had gone to the doctor for a physical. She found strong evidence of diabetes and said, "It appears you have diabetes and that is going to hinder you from being an overseas missionary." I went back home and I talked to my mom and dad about it. At that time my dad was really walking with the Lord, and he said, "Dick, if you really want to be healed, if you really think God has called you to be a missionary, maybe you should call for the elders and have them anoint and pray for you."

I was a 16 year old. I was extremely shy. I had never spoken to an elder in my life. They were scary old guys. I said, "Dad, would you call them for me?" My dad wisely said, "Dick, what does the Scripture say? It says, '*if you are sick, you call for the elders.*'"

I thought, "No way!" I really began to wonder whether it was better to stay sick than to call on the elders. I continued to read the Scriptures. The Lord prompted me again. I felt him say, "You are sick. You have a need, and man doesn't have the solution for your need. Call the elders." So, mustering all my courage I called one of the elders. With my hesitancy and nervous voice I said, "This is Dick LaFountain." – "Who?" – "Norman's son. Dick LaFountain." – "Oh yeah, what can I do for you Dick?" "I would like the elders to anoint and pray for me after church on Sunday." Our elders didn't always gather at the front to pray for people. It was only by special appointment. That Sunday came and the elders heard my diagnosis and my sense of being called to be a missionary. They laid hands on me, anointed me with oil, and trusted the Lord with me for my healing.

A week later, the final test came back on the diabetes The doctor said, "I don't know where the diagnosis came from before, but you don't have any evidence of diabetes in your system. You've been completely healed." Isn't that great?! God does wonderful things when we listen to him.

Healing My Weed Poisoning

Psalm 107:20

*He sent His word and he healed them,
and delivered them from their destructions.*

Back in chapter two I told you about my battle with weed poisoning that afflicted me every year in July. If you've never had poison ivy then you don't know the agony of the itch and running sores.

Marilyn's dad said he never had poison Ivy. He could tear it out by the roots and it wouldn't affect him. When we went to live with them in a big farmhouse before going to the mission field there was a whole slope of poison ivy growing by the pond. Marilyn assumed she was like her dad and never got poison ivy either. One day she took that weed whacker and started attacking it. When she finished she came into the house and showered. The next day her ankles were red and swollen. She had a severe case of poison ivy up to her knees.

I would get what looked like poison ivy, but it was called weed poisoning. It got so bad that I had runny sores all over my body. It would start out as that little blemish then spread. It would spread onto my arms, then to my torso and down to my feet and legs. It would get everywhere. All the parts of my body were infected with this thing.

As I mentioned in chapter two, they took me to the hospital because it was so bad. I actually had blisters all over me that ran with yellow pus that was constantly oozing out of them. Back in that day they didn't have some of the antihistamines and steroid shots like we do today. So they did experiments on me. I was the guinea pig. They put me in these purple baths. I don't know what kind of chemical was in it but they put me in this purple baths to soak. It was supposed to dry up the poison Ivy or the weed poisoning. Well, it didn't. I was in the hospital for a week and it got worse. I had running sores all over my face.

Every year from the time I was eight years old to about sixteen years old, I had that disease every summer and they couldn't do anything about it. Eventually my mother sat down with me and said, "Dick, you said the Lord called you to be a missionary. But if you're missionary, you have to go out in the jungle. You have to go out in the weeds and you always get this weed poisoning. How could you be a missionary?" She wanted me to be a missionary, but she told me I really needed to think this through. Sadly, she said, "Unless the Lord heals you. I don't think you could be a missionary."

Well, I went to prayer. I remember the night I went to prayer on my knees down by my bedside and asked the Lord to do a miracle in my life. It was about this same time that I had rededicated my life to the Lord to be a missionary. "You need to heal me of this disease," I pleaded. "If you have called me then you must equip me to do your will. I ask you in the name of Jesus to heal this body."

The Lord did just that. After that, I would get little spots of poison ivy on me, but never this spreading disease that I had before. Jesus still heals today.

Aimee's Asthma

2 Corinthians 12:8-10

I asked the Lord three times to take it away from me. He answered me, "I am all you need. I give you my loving-favor. My power works best in weak people." I am happy to be weak and have troubles so I can have Christ's power in me. I receive joy when I am weak. I receive joy when people talk against me and make it hard for me and try to hurt me and make trouble for me. I receive joy when all these things come to me because of Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

I don't claim to know all the mysteries of God. William Cowper, a famous hymn writer penned, "God works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform." There are times when God answers prayer immediately in dramatic ways, and there are times when it feels like He does not hear our cries at all. It is a great mystery.

I had just begun pastoral ministry in 1972 as pastor of a little church with about 30 people. One of the topics I preached on was the healing that comes in Christ and how we can trust Him for healing of our bodies. At the time our little daughter, Aimee, had chronic asthma. She would often have asthma attacks and not be able to breathe. It would come on suddenly. We'd often have to rush to the hospital with her, not knowing if she'd make it, and really fearing that she was going to stop breathing before we got there. It was not a pleasant situation. It was life-threatening. It was terrifying. She battled these asthma attacks frequently.

We taught Aimee to pray and trust the Lord for her body. We had trusted the Lord for healing many of our sicknesses. I remember one particular night. I had preached on prayer and healing. We went home and as we went to bed, I knelt beside Aimee's bed to pray with her. I reminded her to pray for Grandma and Pop-pop and then I said, "Remember to pray for your asthma too. Let's ask God to heal you." I bowed my head and I said, "You pray first." There was silence. I thought perhaps she didn't hear me, so I said it again, "Aimee, you go ahead and pray. I'll pray afterwards."

Again there was silence. That seemed strange. I opened my eyes and looked at her. My little girl was lying in her bed with tears streaming down her face. I said, "What's the matter?" She said, "Daddy, I don't think Jesus is going to heal my asthma. I don't think God hears me."

Even as I tell this story after all these years my heart breaks. My little Aimee had this terrible disease. She loved the Lord with all her heart and she had cried to Him, but He didn't answer. We had anointed and prayed for her in church and God had not healed her. There she lay in bed despairing of hope saying, "I don't think God hears me because He didn't answer prayer."

After praying with Aimee I went back to our bedroom and shared with Marilyn what Aimee had said. We just wept and prayed. After this I stopped preaching on healing. I was wrestling with the Lord about this whole matter of healing because He hadn't answered our prayer for Aimee.

A Paralyzed Man Is Healed

Isaiah 53:5

*But he was pierced through for our transgressions,
He was crushed for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace
was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed.*

A few weeks later I received a phone call from a family in the church that had not attended our church for years. They'd been away from the church for about ten years, long before I ever came there. They got mad at somebody in the church, so they quit coming. I had visited them on many occasions trying to encourage them to come back to church.

I remember what they said to me on that first visit. They looked at me and said, "Pastor LaFountain, we don't need to come to church. We have Rex Humbarnd on the TV and he preaches a lot better than you do." (How would they know? They had never heard me preach.) I said to them, "I don't doubt that he preaches well. But God didn't say listen to good preachers. He said, "Gather yourselves together and do not forsake it as the manner of some is and do it even more when you see the day of the Lord approaching." They were stubborn and disobedient people.

That morning I received a phone call from the wife. She was frantic. She said, "Pastor LaFountain, you need to come right now. My husband has had a stroke. He's paralyzed from his neck down and he won't let me call for an ambulance. He said call the preacher."

I wanted to say, "Do you have Rex Humbard's phone number? Call him." But I didn't. I wondered in my mind why they were you calling me. They weren't my parishioners. They were mean spirited people. They were not walking with God. They were disobedient to the Holy Spirit. My daughter hadn't been healed of her disease and loves Jesus with all her heart. What right did they have to ask me to come and pray for them?

I buttoned my lip and didn't say it, but I thought it. She pleaded but I argued, "You need to call an ambulance and get him to the hospital immediately." She countered, "I can't, my husband won't let me. He's paralyzed. He's lying on the floor and he says you've got to call Pastor LaFountain. God said 'Call Pastor La Fountain.'"

I rolled my eyes and I said, "I'll be right over." On the way over to their house I was struggling. I didn't want to pray for this guy. I didn't believe for a moment that God was going to heal him. I really questioned whether God was going to heal anybody and certainly not through me.

I drove to the house but I was struggling with my own lack of faith. As I approached the house the Holy Spirit whispered to me, "Speak to him about his spiritual condition." Then the Lord gave me Hebrews 10:25, "*Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together as the matter of some is.*"

I walked in the front door and there he was on the floor. He hadn't moved. He couldn't move, except to turn his neck. He could talk, but he was completely paralyzed. He told me how desperate he was and that he didn't know what to do. The he explained, "Pastor, God told me to call Pastor LaFountain and have him pray for you. Then the Lord said, 'Pastor LaFountain has a word for you. Do you have a word for me?'"

I thought, "Do I ever have a word for you!" I knew that God was in this. Boldly I told him about his sin. I was blunt and I was direct. I told him the word that the Lord spoke to me on the way over to see him. I said, "You are disobedient to the Holy Spirit. You know the word of God. You've disobeyed for ten years. You haven't gathered together with other believers. You're angry at a brother in Christ. You are unforgiving and you are bitter and God is holding that against you. This has been God's judgment on you for your sin." Sometimes I just lose patience with people. I was not merciful with that man. I had no pity him. I told him what God put on my heart.

The guy was still laying on the floor as I said these things. He started to cry. He was under conviction. He said, "You are right. God spoke to my heart about that. That's exactly what God's been saying to me and I'm wrong. I am bitter and angry and I have forsaken the Lord in His house. I need God's forgiveness. Pastor, please pray with me."

So, I prayed with him. He confessed his sins and asked the Lord to forgive him and wash away those sins. When he finished praying he said, "Okay. Pastor, now you can anoint and pray for my healing. Now you can pray for my body."

I wanted to say, "I'm not going to pray for you. You don't deserve it." But the Lord didn't say, "If you deserve it, call for the elders of the church and ask them to pray over you and anoint you with oil." He says do it in the name of the Lord. So, in those moments, I knelt down next to him on the floor, anointed him with oil, and prayed, "Lord Jesus, you are stronger than any disease. You are the God of all of our health and our strength and I ask that if it be your will that you would touch this man and heal his body in Jesus' name. Amen."

My intent was to finish the prayer and then tell the woman to call an ambulance. No sooner had I finished praying when he said, "Wow. Something just happened." Then he moved his arms.

Surprisingly he moved his body. He sat up. From there he got to his knees, then he stood up. He started moving around the room. He did exercises. He got on the floor. This 80 year old guy started doing pushups on the floor! By the time he'd finished, he jumped up and started running around the room shouting, "Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. I am healed."

I was shocked. I thought, "This is not right. My poor little daughter is at home with asthma, with attack after attack. She loves the Lord, pure in heart, simple in faith, not disobedient to God, and here was this son of a gun who in a moment of conviction confesses his sins and the Lord forgives him and the Lord heals him. It's not fair."

Of course I rejoiced with him. It was a miracle. But before I left I told him what he needed to do to complete his repentance, and that was to start going back to church. Well, that brother and his wife showed up for church the next Sunday morning. They were faithful to the forgiveness that God gave them. They followed through and they came to church. But when they saw the other family they had been angry with for ten years all the bitterness came back and they never returned to the church, still he remained healed.

I look at that and I have a thousand questions. I struggled with that for many years. As I preach the word of God it is not with some name it and claim it pie-in-the-sky faith. I do not understand the ways of the Lord, why he heals some and leaves others on their sick beds. I have seen strange things. I have seen wondrous things. I have seen things that just don't make sense to me. I don't want anyone to be discouraged from trusting the Lord for healing. But God is God and does what he pleases in heaven and on earth.

The Lord says, *“Not by might nor by power
but by my Spirit says the Lord.”* (Zechariah 4:6)

Aimee's Broken Arm

Jeremiah 32:27

"I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?"

It was the last year that we were in Brazil before we came back to the States on our first furlough. Our daughter happened to be roller-skating in the front of our house, which had a nice slope so she could roll down the hill and go near the street, then climb back up and roll down again. Aimee was a wonderful loving little girl, but she was no athlete. Her process of roller-skating was with extreme caution. Unfortunately, she lost her footing, slipped and fell down on her arm and broke it.

I remember the scream. I remember the horror of going outside and seeing my daughter with her arm bent out of shape at a 30 degree angle. You could see her arm was broken and bent in the middle.

Of course the heroic dad that I am, I wanted to help, so I rushed to her side. I knew what to do. I thought it would be best to set it right away. I know now that was a bad idea, but it was the gut reaction of a father wanting to help his daughter. So, I grabbed Aimee's arm and pulled hard on it to try to reset it. It didn't help. It just made matters worse.

We rushed her to the emergency clinic. They took x-rays and then they set the arm properly, and put a cast on it. This was just weeks before leaving to go home to America. They said in six weeks the cast needed come off. "When you get home," they instructed, "have the doctor take it off and check that it was set properly." They were not able to look at that while it was mending itself.

After six weeks of great irritation from wearing a cast Aimee wanted it off. So we carefully removed the cast. We were heartsick. I wanted to cry. I said, "Oh God, what have I done to my baby?" The doctors told us the arm needed to be re-broken and reset. We couldn't bear to put our daughter through that again.

He said, "In two weeks you'll come back and then we'll have to reset it." We prayed. I'll tell you there have never been moments when I've prayed harder. I felt it was my fault, my stupidity that caused this break to be worse than it needed to be. I prayed, "Oh God, we need you to do a miracle for Aimee. We need you to heal this arm so she doesn't have to go through this pain." Our prayer warriors and friends went to the throne and said, "Lord, you're our friend, Jesus. We've walked with you and we've seen you do great things for people that didn't deserve it. Would you heal Aimee's arm?"

Two weeks later we went to the doctor. The doctor unraveled all that gauze and the splint. We looked and her arm was perfect. Not a bend, not a bump. Nothing was wrong. It was perfectly mended! Praise the Lord!

Healing My Mouth Sore

Jeremiah 30:17

*"But I will restore you to health
and heal your wounds, declares the Lord."*

For many months I was suffering. I had a calcium deposit in my mouth that would rub my tongue like sandpaper while I was preaching. I would finish the service with bleeding gums. It was painful. I went to the dentist, then to an oral surgeon. He ground it off and sewed it up. After a week or so, it grew back. It kept scraping on my tongue when I spoke. This went on for months. I was in pain every time I preached. I asked the Lord to heal me. I was doing everything the doctors told me to do, but it just kept coming back.

One of the godly men in our church came up to me after a service and asked, "Pastor Dick, why haven't you called for the elders to come and anoint and pray for you?" I felt that was a rebuke to me. I responded that the Lord hadn't told me to do so, and when He does tell me, I will do it.

Another couple of months went by and I was leading a prayer retreat at a church camp. There were probably about twenty lay people gathered around in a circle and just a few pastors. While we were in the middle of that prayer service, the Lord whispered to my heart, "Now I want you to ask to be anointed and prayed for." I looked around and thought, "Oh, it's mostly lay people. They aren't elders or pastors." But the Lord said now was the

time. I told them the story of my calcium deposit and how it was not healed after many months. I said, "I need you to anoint and pray for me." All of them came forward and I knelt down. They prayed for me. Nothing happened.

The next morning I woke up and as I prepared to go to breakfast, I realized there was no pain in my mouth. I could feel no calcium rubbing my tongue. I went to the bathroom, opened my mouth real wide and looked in with a flashlight. That calcium deposit was gone. The redness was gone. The scar tissue was gone. There was no evidence that irritation had ever been there. God had healed me!

So when the Lord tells you that you need to be anointed and prayed for that's him stimulating your faith and saying, "Now is the time."

Healing My Plantar Wart

Proverbs 4:20-22

My son, give attention to my words, for they are life to those who find them and health to all their body.

This particular year I had been struggling with a plantar wart that would not go away. The doctor tried acid, burning it off, and finally surgery to remove the wart. But it kept coming back. It was an odd ailment. I had plantar warts when I was young but rarely as an adult. The fact that it kept coming back seemed very odd.

I was leading a prayer retreat with pastors in the fall of that year. As we were praying, I asked if anyone had a prayer need? We were sitting in a circle and had placed a chair in the middle for anyone to sit in who needed prayer. I humorously called it the "chair of shame," because most people didn't want to be the center of everyone's attention, but really it was the "chair of blessing." Anyone who had a need could come and sit in the chair and be prayed for by the group. What happened next surprised me.

No one came to sit in the chair. The Holy Spirit whispered to me and said, "Why don't you sit in the chair?" I thought, "Me, with all my baggage? No way. I'm not going to tell them my troubles." Still no one came. Finally the Holy Spirit urged me to be a good example and sit in the chair. I thought it might be an opportune time for the men to pray for my plantar wart.

I sat in the chair and one of my pastor friends came up to me and asked, "Dick I want to pray for you but not for your body. I want to know what's hurting in your heart?" That caught me off guard. I thought he was going to pray for my toe, that's what was hurting.

Without thinking about it I opened my mouth to respond and to my surprise I blurted out, "My daddy doesn't love me." Suddenly I started crying. I sobbed, "My daddy has never loved me and never told me he loved me. He never touched me tenderly. He had never affirmed me in any way. Now he's in a nursing home and he is out of his mind and I'll never hear my dad say, "I love you, my son," or "I'm proud of you."

I grew up in a home where I didn't get affirmation. There weren't many positive comments or praise given to any of us. My parents didn't know how to give affirming words because their parents didn't affirm them. No one ever said "I love you" when they were growing up. Nobody ever gave dad any tender touches. There were lots of touches, but they weren't tender. So that lack of positive affirmations passed along through the generations to our family. We too did not get many affirmations. I remember being very insecure about everything.

A few years earlier my dad started exhibiting symptoms of Alzheimer's. He was now in a nursing home and couldn't recognize anyone. We would go in to talk to him. He would just babble incoherently.

This realization caught me off guard. I was shocked. I hadn't been thinking about my dad not loving me, but it must have been deep in my heart. It had been there for years and I hadn't recognized it. I wept as I told my story of an unloving father and the missing affirmation from my dad. Other men identified with my pain. They too had experienced a lack of love from their fathers. They were quietly sobbing in their seats as I spoke. When I finished they gathered around me to pray for me. They laid hands on me and prayed that the Lord would lift that heavy burden and that the Lord would take the bitterness out of my heart and heal it, that this healing would extend to the healing that I needed in my body.

After the prayer retreat I felt the Lord say, "You need to go visit your dad." I argued, "Lord, he's in a nursing home. He doesn't understand anything. He doesn't know anybody." But the Lord continued to say, "Go." As I prepared to go I asked the Lord for a miracle that somehow in my visit my dad would convey to me that he loved me.

A couple weeks later I drove out to Michigan to visit my dad in the nursing home. I found him sitting in his little wheelchair. His head was bowed. There was drool coming from his mouth. I walked in and approached the wheelchair. I knelt down in front of him and I said, "Dad, dad!" He just stared blankly into space as though he didn't hear me. After a few moments he looked toward me and I repeated, "Dad, it's your son. It's Richard. It's Dick. I'm here to visit you."

My dad's eyes suddenly became very clear and focused. He looked at me and smiled. Then he reached out and took my cheek and pinched and shook it lovingly. As he did this he babbled something unintelligible. He was smiling the whole time. I don't think he was speaking in tongues, but I interpreted that expression. I interpreted that as the answer to my prayer. Dad could never say, "I love you" when he was clothed in his right mind. But when he took my cheek I felt him saying, "You're my son, and I'm proud of you." He had never done that before or since.

I took it as God's blessing that dad was still able to say, "I love you. I'm proud of you son." That day the Lord healed my heart. A burden was lifted. I am so glad the Lord healed that wound in my heart that had been there all my life. Had my dad died my heart would have remained wounded. I would have carried my bitterness deep down inside without knowing it for the rest of my life.

I drove back home with peace in my heart that my dad did love me, though his life experience kept him from being able to express it. That night when I went to bed as I took my socks off I thought of my plantar wart. I examined my foot. It was gone. Not even a red mark or a scar was left. God healed my heart and my foot. A year later dad went home to be with the Lord.