

Faith Is Action

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THE WALK OF HEALING

PART TWO



Recap Part One: In order to walk in *healing*, we must “walk by faith and not by sight” (1Cor.5:7), and in order to walk by faith, we must walk in love, because “faith works by love” (Gal.5:6). In Part Two, we will discuss *the royal law of love*. As we read familiar healing verses, we won’t only look at them through *the lens of faith*, but through *the lens of love*.

God’s Healing Covenant

Exodus 15:26: “And God said, If you will diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord your God, and will do that which is right in His sight, and will give ear to His commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon you which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee.”

The Hebrew is JEHOVAH-RAPHA, and JEHOVAH denotes *covenant*. He promised, “I make a *healing covenant* with you that I will not allow the diseases of the ungodly to come on you.” He said in Psalms 89:34 “My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that is gone out of my mouth.” God will keep His part, so if we will do that which is right in His sight and keep all His command-

ments, He will keep us healed. He said, “I am the Lord that *healeth thee*.” That little *eth* means it is in the *present tense*, denoting *continual* action—everyday God is our healer.

The Book of Hebrews says, “Jesus was made a surety of a better covenant—established on better promises (7:22, 8:6). If healing was part of the old covenant, how much more is it a part of the new? The condition for us to avoid disease and to receive healing when we get sick is to keep all God’s laws—not only the

Ten Commandments and the dietary laws (they play a necessary role in walking in *physical healing*), but also keeping “*the royal law*.”



The Royal Law of Love

James 2:8: “If you fulfill the royal law, according to the scripture, You shall love your neighbor as yourself, you do well.” The highest law God has given us is to love Him with all our heart, soul, and might, and to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. If we keep these two laws, *we will keep them all*. We will not lie, steal, commit adultery, covet, kill, etc. These are subtopics under *the royal law of love*.

At least seven times in the wilderness God commanded Israel to

love Him. This begs the question: *Can love be commanded? Can you command someone to love God?* Our first response is probably *No*. But God did. He commands us *to love Him*, and *to love our neighbors as ourselves*, because this love is not some *foo-foo, fluffy feeling*. That's usually infatuation that wears thin quickly. *Fondness* can fizzle when challenges to the relationship arise. But when you have a deep, committed love, troubles can come, adversities, sicknesses, losses, and that love is an anchor that holds you steady until you pass through the storm.

In the Bible, *love is not just an emotion—it is a decision of the will*. In Ephesians 5:25, Paul wrote, “*Husbands, love your wives.*” It's a command—not predicated on how he feels or whether everything is wonderful. There are no sub-clauses. He said, “*Love your wife even as Christ loved the Church, and gave himself—sacrificed himself for it.*” If a man will love his wife *this way*, God won't have to command his wife to love her husband; she will willingly love him back.

God commands us to love, because *the whole law hinges on love—613 extended laws hang on two*. If we don't love God first, and our neighbor second, He could send angels to give us commandments, prophets to prophesy, signs, wonders and miracles, and we would not obey. *We cannot unless we walk in love.*

Matthew recorded a day when

Jesus was bombarded by the Sadducees, Pharisees, and lawyers, who came to argue points about the Law. A lawyer asked a question *tempting* Him, saying, “*Master, which is the great commandment in the Law?*” *Jesus said unto him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and all the prophets*” (Mt.22:36-40).

Jesus confirmed that everything we receive from God is based on keeping these two commandments. Instead of struggling to obey all the “*Thou shall nots*” in the OT commandments—we simply learn to *walk in love*. Love the Lord, and love your neighbor as yourself: These two commandments are the hinges that open the door to health and healing. This is what James meant: “*If you fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture to love the Lord your God and your neighbor as yourself, you will do well.*”

The Law of Healing

Before his death, Moses gave a second witness: “*And the Lord will take away from you all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt which you know upon you...*” (Deut.7:15). “*And you shall serve the Lord your God, and He shall bless your bread and your water. And I will take sickness away from the midst of*

you. *There shall nothing cast their young nor be barren in your land. The number of your days I will fulfill*" (Ex.23:25-26).

We are now talking about *walking in divine healing*. Not only will God remove sickness from us, but He promised to fulfill the number of our days.

In Deut. 33:25, Moses said, "*And as your days, so shall your strength be.*" I want this and claim it often: "*Lord, You promised to give me **length** of days and **strength** of days!*" I not only want to live out all my days, but I want to live them in good health, so I can be active in the work of the Lord.

We should not die from some terrible sickness before our time. We are all going to die sometime, but I don't want to die *before my time*. I want to live out every day that God has written in His book. Psalms 139 tells me that *all my days were written in the book before I was even formed in my mother's womb*: Sharon Ann Hardy Knotts, November 27, 1951, 11:51 AM—is when I came into this world. He knows what day I'm going to exit, and I don't want to exit one day early because of evil disease. I want to fulfill the number of my days, so like Paul: "*I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God*" (Acts20:24). So I can stand before Him and say, "*Father, I finished the work you gave me to do*" (Jn.17:4).

The Flip Side

Failure to walk in love can bring physical disease. Some may take offense at this, and think I'm saying that if you don't obey the commandments to walk in love, God will chasten you with sickness. *I am not saying this*. God does not chasten His children with sickness and disease. He's a much better parent than you and I, and I sure wouldn't chasten my kids with sickness and disease, would you? But *we* can open the door to sickness.

Our bodies are directly affected by the condition of our spirits and souls: "*Beloved, I wish above all things that you would prosper, and be in health, even as your soul prospers*" (3John 2). This is simultaneous action. The condition of our spirit and soul does affect our physical body. Emotions have a tremendous effect on the body according to medical science. Often doctors tell patients their problem is emotional stress when they have run all kinds of tests and diagnostics, and they all come back normal. That's just another way of saying, "*You've got a soul problem.*" Many scriptures deal with this, especially in Proverbs.

We generally don't like the word *fat*, but in the KJV *fat* is a good word, because it means *healthy, prosperous, sound*. In the dietary laws God gave Israel, they were forbidden to eat the fat of meats. In Bible days, they ate healthy. They were active; walked everywhere; didn't sit at computers all day, etc. Being over-

weight was not a problem. It is a modern problem due to our lifestyles and many diseases are its result.

When the Bible speaks of having *fat bones*, it refers to the *skeleton* and the *bone marrow*. Our skeleton is determined by genetics, but with age it can start breaking down if we don't take care of it. There are different types of arthritis: Osteoarthritis comes from wear and tear, especially repetitive actions, and injury. Inflammation develops, wearing away our bones as we age. But some arthritis, like rheumatoid arthritis, is caused when the immune system attacks its own body.

Bone marrow is part of the immune system. It creates blood cells, and "*The life of the flesh is in the blood*" (Lev.17:11). When someone has a catastrophic disease like cancer, often the cure is a bone marrow transplant from a healthy sibling or someone who is a close match. They kill the bone marrow of the sick person and put in the new bone marrow. That is how vital bone marrow is to life. So when the Bible talks about *fat bones*, it's not just talking about your skeleton, but that which pertains to life.

Unhealthy bone marrow causes serious diseases. We have cells in our bodies that are attackers and defenders. They recognize disease like cancer cells, and they attack them and kill them. Everybody at some point in life is exposed to cancer, but when you have a strong immune system you won't develop the disease. It's

when the immune system is compromised that disease is able to develop.

What Goes in & Comes Out

Scripture shows the body's health is affected by two things: *What we put in our mouths and what comes out of our mouths—our food and our words*. Some are allergic to certain foods, and when they eat them, they develop pain in their joints. Gout, a type of arthritis, is one of those. The best way to avoid recurring episodes is to stay away from foods that trigger it. It's hard when it is a favorite food. You can stay away from it for a long time and forget the pain; then decide to try it again, and it comes back. *Because what goes in your mouth is affecting your body*. It's the same with hypertension, diabetes, and other diseases on the rise in the U.S. But just as significant: *What comes out of your mouth* directly affects your body.

Proverbs 15:30: "*The light of the eye rejoices the heart, and a good report makes the bones fat.*" Do you want fat bones—to be healthy in your immune system as well as your skeleton? A good report will give you fat bones, that is, a sound skeleton and a healthy immune system. "*Pleasant words are as the honey comb, sweet to the soul and health to the bones*" (Pro.16:24). Here we see *soul and body* working together: *When your soul is sweet, your body will be healthy*. The way to have a sweet soul is by listening, receiving, and speaking good reports—not negative.

There is a direct correlation between your emotions and your health. Show me someone who is an emotional wreck, full of fear, rejection, anger, and I will show you someone with a sick body and all kinds of health problems, because of the emotional stuff going on inside that their body is responding to. He/she can go to the doctor and take medicine, but if he doesn't minister to his soul, he won't get better.

Proverbs 17:22: "*A merry heart does good like a medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones.*" Show me someone with a *broken spirit*, and I will show you someone who is *physically unhealthy*. But someone with a merry heart, good disposition, who is optimistic, upbeat, and speaks words of faith and good report, is someone walking in healing. Should they come under attack physically, because we live in a fallen world exposed to many toxic things, it doesn't take a hold on them and take them down, because their spirit is able to sustain them: "*The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?*" (Pro.18:14). This is why it is imperative to also minister to one's spirit during a time of sickness.

Proverbs 14:30: "*A sound heart is the life of the flesh, but envy the rottenness of the bones.*" My Lord, I don't want rotten bones! By a *sound heart*, the wiseman was not just talking about the big muscle inside your chest pumping blood throughout your body. Of course, we understand

a sound heart is the life-keeper of the body, but he was also speaking of the condition of the heart spiritually, emotionally, and mentally. Does he think on good things? Speak good things? Feed on good reports? *Does he walk in love?* Because the opposite of walking in love is *walking in envy*—jealousy, malice, unforgiveness, and bitterness—and these will *bring rottenness to the bones*, literally.

Pride is the worst sin, and envy and jealousy are tentacles that grow out of it. Why is pride so dangerous? Perhaps you are thinking, *It's what made Satan fall*, and that's true. But another reason pride is so dangerous—it *blinds a person to all his other faults*. That's why we must get at the root and dig it up in order to be free from a critical, judgmental, cynical, murmuring spirit. No one likes to be around somebody who complains all the time. Once I visited an elderly relative in the hospital, and all he did was complain about the nurses, the aides, the water, the food, the bed, the pillow, everything! He couldn't say anything good about anything. I kept thinking, *You are not going to heal and get out of this bed with that attitude*. Being elderly, he had a double whammy. I'm sure he didn't even realize how much he murmured and complained, because it had become a pattern in his life.

The Way to Go

Job 21:23-25: "*One dies in his full strength, being wholly at ease*

and quiet. “His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow.” (When I die that’s the way I want to go.) “And another dies in the bitterness of his soul, and never eats with pleasure.”

Metaphorically, Job presented a major contrast of how to die. We are all going to die unless the rapture comes first. But a person can die at ease and at peace, with his breasts full of milk and healthy bone marrow—his bones are not dry with envy, but moist with life. His breasts are nourished with calcium, a bone strengthener. This is the way God wants for us.

Another dies in bitterness of soul, and a bitter soul brings disease to the body. The nutrients of his food did not benefit him, because he was eaten up with envy, malice, and bitterness. He never had pleasure in anything. Have you ever met people, especially when they get old, that nothing pleases them? You could stand on your head and do cartwheels and not get a smile on their face. Nothing makes them happy; it’s like they are set to be negative and cranky, and that’s just the way they are.

Visiting nursing homes to minister to the old and infirm is a wonderful ministry. The young may not really appreciate it and think *It’s boring! I don’t like going!* Remember, what you sow, you are going to reap. If Jesus tarries, you’re going to get old one day and will want someone to come see you. You will want your

children to visit you, and not stick you somewhere and forget you, because you’re a crank, and they don’t want to be around you. (Some children forsake their parents, not because they are cranks, but because the children are ungrateful and selfish.)

In nursing homes, you also see people who are happy and grateful. They are sweet, and they thank you about fifty times for coming. They love you, and can’t wait for you to come back. And you see other people who are like stone. You tell them every beautiful verse in the Bible you know about how God loves them, and they just sit there and look at you with a scowl. When the time comes for each to die, how do you think it will play out?

I hope you are seeing that when you walk in love, you reap the benefits in your body.

Proverbs 3:7: “*Be not wise in your own eyes: fear the LORD and depart from evil. This shall be health to your navel and marrow to your bones.*” While you probably don’t spend a lot of time worrying about the health of your belly button, *health to your navel* refers to nourishment for life. When a baby is in utero, it gets its substance through the umbilical cord attached to the navel. The umbilical cord means *life*, and today new mothers are saving the blood of their umbilical cords to be frozen, because it has antibodies that could possibly cure the child if it got certain sicknesses later. Do you

think God knew what He was talking about when He inspired Solomon to write this? *The navel, bone marrow, and bones represent health and life.*

A Healing Breakthrough

Isaiah 58 is a powerful chapter that speaks of health: *“Then shall your light break forth as the morning, and your health shall spring forth speedily: and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rereward. Then shalt you call, and the LORD shall answer; you shall cry, and he shall say, Here I am...”* (vv.8-9). These are the healing promises. Now for the conditions:

“...If you take away from the midst of you the yoke, the putting forth of the finger and speaking vanity...” We put forth the finger when we are telling someone off. When we are angry with our kids, we get that pointer finger going. Have you ever told your husband or wife, *“Don’t point your finger at me!”*? Perhaps you know they are speaking the truth, but you see that finger, and you take more offense. It has been rightly observed that when you point your pointer finger at someone, there are four others pointing back at you. God is saying, *“Stop pointing your finger at people! Stop being critical, judgmental, and fault-finding!”*

When we do, the blessing is *our health will spring forth speedily!* If you have been trying to get healed, or trying to win the battle over something that keeps coming back, and

you don’t understand why, because you know you’re walking in faith—*then check to see if you are walking in love.* I’m not saying it is the only reason, but I’m saying, *try walking in love.* You could have a healing breakthrough when your health will take off:

“And the LORD shall guide you continually and satisfy your soul in drought...” You have to first prosper in your soul. *“... and make fat your bones...”* Then your physical body will prosper. *“...And you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not”* (v.11). This is the picture of someone who is blessed in every part of his being, spirit, soul, and body.

Saints, we cannot walk in pride, envy, anger, discord, and not open a door to problems in our bodies. Rage and anger can literally bring on heart attacks. If you know people who are always angry, always ready to blow their tops, as they get older, if they continue to have temper rages, they will open the door to health problems like high blood pressure, heart palpitations. During fits of anger, muscles tense up, affecting the heart and lungs. I remember when my kids were teenagers and provoked me to anger, I would yell at them until I could feel the veins in my neck bulging and my face getting hot. Imagine what that was doing internally. When you’re young, you may get by with it, but it will catch up with you if you don’t change. After I injured my back, when I got upset, all my back

muscles tensed up, and my pain went through the roof. I quickly learned to avoid those triggers. I would not let anyone bait me with contentious words.

A Fatal Heart Attack

There was a man in the Bible who literally died from anger. His name *Nabal* means *fool*. Believe me, he lived up to his name. He was a wealthy man. Riches in those times were measured in cattle, and he had 3000 sheep, 1000 goats, and men to lead them to pasture and shear them when needed. It was that time, and they had gone to Carmel to shear them. At the same time, David and his 600 men were in the area. David was not yet king but was still running from King Saul who was trying to kill him. David had gathered those rag-tag men that nobody else wanted, and they were loyal to him.

When they came upon Nabal's men and animals, they began protecting them from marauders who would steal the sheep, and they stayed with them until all the shearing was done. Eventually, David and his men were having a hard time finding food; they were not on Saul's payroll, eating the king's food like his army. So David sent 10 men to Nabal instructing them to ask him if he would spare some sheep to feed our men when he fed his men. This was not an unusual request. Eastern hospitality alone should have made him comply. Secondly, David's men were *protecting his property*.

But nasty Nabal hatefully jeered: "*Who is David?*" Well, everybody in Israel knew who David was! He was a national hero, the young giant-slayer who killed Goliath. It would be like me asking all the men here today, "*Who is Ray Lewis?*" Or asking all the Baltimore baseball fans: "*Who is Cal Ripken?*" Nabal was sarcastic and rude, and so he refused them.

When it got back to David, he was enraged and instructed 400 of his men to gird on their swords. They were off to kill Nabal and all his men. But Nabal had a wonderful wife, Abigail, who the Bible says, "*was beautiful in countenance and a woman of wisdom and discretion.*" Now that's a catch! I know you are thinking, *How on earth did he get her?* I am sure she didn't have anything to say about it. He was rich, and her father, no doubt, gave her to him because of the fat bride price he could pay.

When news reached Abigail that David and his men were on the way to kill her husband, she wisely intervened, not telling him. She met David with donkeys laden with food. She bowed before him, saying, "*Upon me let this iniquity be.*" She expressed how her husband was only living up to his name—a *fool*. He was so evil, his own workers said, "*You cannot speak to him, he is such a son of Belial*" (an appellative of Satan). Her wise words and generous gifts of food appeased David's vengeance and prevented a catastrophe.

When Abigail arrived home, her husband was holding a drunken feast, so she wisely decided not to say anything until the morning when he was sober. When she told him what she had done in going to David to prevent him killing them all, Nabal became so angry, *“his heart turned to stone,”* and ten days later he died (1Sam.25). A chronic problem with anger and temper puts the heart at risk.

Scripture has much to say about anger and temper. Proverbs 27:3-4 says that anger is like carrying around a heavy stone or sand bag. Johns Hopkins University did a study on how anger contributes to increased heart attacks, *especially among men*. In a fit of anger, the body secretes negative chemicals that can take 24 hours to dissipate. A person who is angry every day is doing constant bodily harm to himself.

It also sets the tone in the home, affecting spouses and children. The atmosphere should not be negative, combative, and contentious all the time. If children hear their parents always criticizing people, they will grow up to be critical. How we walk before them is how they are going to walk.

This is a true story about a beloved family pet pregnant with puppies: She got too close to the lawn mower, and it amputated her two hind legs. They rushed the dog to the vet, hoping to save the puppies. They figured they would have to put the dog down, but asked the vet if he could save the puppies. He said, *“No,*

you can't save the puppies unless you save the mother.”

He said that he would stitch her up, and he believed she would survive, and that she would eventually teach herself how to walk again. She survived and had perfectly healthy puppies. In the meantime, after she had healed, she taught herself to walk on her front legs and scoot her backside. When the puppies were ready to walk, they too walked on their front legs and scooted their backsides. *So how are you walking? Are you limping around under a heavy sandbag of anger? Are you passing to your children an ole critical spirit? Jesus said, “By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another”* (Jn.13:35).

Friends, I have been sitting on this message for years, because I thought people would be offended, but the Lord has impressed on my spirit that He wants to use this word to help some who are stuck in bad habits of anger, temper, critical, judgmental attitudes, and self-inflicted stress. I hope you will find the deliverance I found when God showed me these things.

Laughter is Medicine

Last month in Part One, I related how I overcame fear that was paralyzing my faith. I shared the story of the day it came on me so heavy that my chest kept tightening up, and I walked around the house taking deep sighs, because I felt like I couldn't breathe. When we are upset and under stress, we may feel tightness in

our chests. I've already given you the most important *spiritual remedy*—to *walk in love*. There is also a simple physical antidote I will share with you.

For two summers after I injured my back, we still held Campmeeting at our campgrounds in Fruitland, MD. One night after service, my dad, my husband Benny and I, went with a group to Denny's to eat. At our table was Shirley Lawrence, an anointed songstress, and my dear friend. She and I go way back to our teens when we traveled with my dad in tent meetings. We always have a fun time when we get together, and that night was no exception. We talked about funny stuff we had experienced, remembering old times, and as one thing led to another, we were getting silly and laughing like school girls. I was laughing hard from my belly. I hadn't done this in years, and I kept thinking, *Wow! I feel so good!* My face was tingling, and I felt like I was floating on air. My whole body was relaxed, until I didn't even register any back pain. *Laughter was medicine!*

When God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt after 400 years of bondage, they sang, they danced, and they laughed! Psalm 126:1-2: *"When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing."* They felt like they were in a dream. They went forth sowing tears, but they came out reaping joy (v.5). They came out

laughing!

The Law of Laughter

Laughter is a healing treatment for the body: *It relaxes tight muscles*. A major part of my back pain was severe muscle spasms, and it was worse when I was upset. If I got into an argument, my pain level shot up. I got smart—when I saw a conversation going in that direction, I'd cut it off. I wouldn't answer the phone if I thought there was going to be a problem with the caller. I found if I could stay relaxed, and not allow myself to become distressed, I had less pain. I still practice this.

Consider this: *You cannot pick up or carry a heavy box while you are laughing*. Two people are carrying a heavy box with no problem when somebody says something funny. They start laughing, and what do they do? *They put the box down*, because all their abdominal muscles are totally relaxed, and they need them to carry it. So when you laugh more, you can't carry the heavy burdens the devil's trying to put on you. You can't carry a spirit of criticism, anger, and rage.

Laughter strengthens the immune system. When you laugh hard from your belly, your body produces *immunoglobulin*, which is a major defense against upper respiratory infections. Anyone prone to upper respiratory infections and disease, should learn to laugh more.

Laughter improves circulation. It causes more oxygen to go to our brains. (That's why I was getting tin-

gly.) The *thymus gland* is located at the top and center of the chest. It works with our immune system, helping to keep us healthy. When we are stressed, *the thymus shrinks*. This is why we feel tightening in our chests when we are upset. But when we laugh, the thymus produces good hormones, *causing our brains to release endorphins*. And endorphins make us feel good and deaden pain. *It's nature's pain killer.*

Anyone who suffers with chronic pain will also deal with depression, which makes the pain worse, which deepens the depression, creating a vicious cycle. But if he/she thinks happy thoughts and joyful experiences that bring on laughter, the pain will lessen, because it releases endorphins—*happy hormones*.

Laughing hard massages our internal organs, and this is good for them. It increases blood flow which increases life, because *“The life of the flesh is in the blood”* (Lev.17:11).

I hope you get that laughter is a good idea, but perhaps you are thinking, *Sister Sharon, what if I don't feel like laughing?* What do you do? *You fake it until you make it.* I'm not kidding—it works. Just start saying, *“Ha, ha, ha, ha...”* Air starts coming up from your diaphragm, *and the diaphragm is a stupid muscle—it doesn't know if the laugh is real or fake.* When you say, *“Ha-ha,”* it doesn't know the difference, and once you trigger it, it will keep going, and you will keep laughing. *Try it! It works.*

It happens at our church whenever we sing *“The Joy of the Lord is My Strength.”* When we get to the part *“If you want joy, you can laugh for it,”* and everyone says, *“Ha, ha”* (10 times), they are in the aisles laughing with joy. It is not phony or out of order. *“It is uplifting, believing, rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory, in the unity of love!”*(1Pet.1:8).

Missed Part One? Go online: http://www.soundoffaith.org/fia/2018_pdfs/fia_03_18.pdf