

Church of God, The Eternal

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The Faith Required to Be Healed

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Dear Brethren:

It is such an honor to greet God's remnant body again in this *Monthly Letter* and to express my love and devotion to each one of you, knowing that it is you whom God is inspiring and motivating to seek His righteous mind through the power of His Holy Spirit and His divine law of love.

The mind of God is a mind of faith—faith to be saved and faith to be healed. Many of God's people have failed, or refused to build or receive the faith that brings healing benefits. It is time again to review and come to know and understand the faith required to receive God's healing benefits. What was the faith required to be healed?, and does God always heal?, are two questions we are going to answer in this month's letter.

Here is what Mr. Armstrong said in the *Plain Truth*, December, 1967, *Personal from the Editor*, concerning what our Creator says about health and sickness:

It is God's will that we be IN HEALTH (III John 2). God intended us to obey His laws—His physical laws that operate in our bodies for good health as well as His Spiritual Law. Yet He knew our weaknesses and rebellious nature. When we repent of breaking His Spiritual Law and transgressing against Him, our loving and merciful Father has provided a way for removing the penalty—through Jesus' sacrifice, paying the penalty in our stead.

In like manner, when nature's laws have been broken, this is God's instruction to those who have become His begotten children:

Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and *the prayer of faith*

shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him (James 5:14–15).

Notice important specific points in that instruction. First, it is addressed to, and pertains to those who have become God's own begotten children—those who *are* Christ's—and in Romans 8:9 it is made plain that *only* those who have, and are being *led by*, in daily living (verse 14) His Holy Spirit, are Christ's. Next, it says the prayer of FAITH shall save the sick. But James also says (chapter 1:6–7) that if one's faith wavers, he will not receive the answer. Yet also, in the "faith chapter" of the Bible, Hebrews 11, we read this: he that cometh to God must BELIEVE that He *is*, and that He is a REWARDER of them that diligently seek Him (verse 6).

And again, what we ask of Him we receive BECAUSE we keep His Commandments, and do those things that please Him (I John 3:22).

Question: Are we pleasing God in following Christ's command to forsake physical and spiritual sin? Christ put the same emphasis on putting away physical sin as He did spiritual sin (John 5:14 and John 8:11).

Has our focus been lopsided? Has our focus been solely on the spiritual? God's end-time apostle said in his booklet, *The Plain Truth About Healing*, page 54, that the word *sin* in James 5:15 is undoubtedly referring to physical sin. "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins [undoubtedly referring to physical sin], they shall be forgiven him." If that is not a promise, then we have no promise of the forgiveness of sins or of salvation and the gift of eternal life!

Oh yes, there are conditions, but God reveals those conditions: obedience and faith. Never, concerning healing, does the Bible say, "If it is God's will." If you have asked for healing and have not received it, there are only a few possible reasons.

Reason Number One

Reason number one: You are not Christ's because you are not fulfilling God's will! Scripture clearly and plainly reveals that only those who have and are being led by God's Holy Spirit daily are Christ's.

Mr. Armstrong said in an *Open Letter to Newly Begotten Brethren Recently Baptized* (those who are Christ's):

In order to GROW in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord (II Peter 3:18); in order to develop spiritually and overcome, and have perfected in you the

CHARACTER of God ready to be fully BORN of God, YOU MUST DO TWO THINGS DAILY WITHOUT FAIL!

You must not only read, but eagerly, earnestly STUDY the Word of God to learn how to live [and, yes, every day] . . . PRAY WITHOUT CEASING!

Mr. Armstrong taught in his booklet, *The Unpardonable Sin*, that a converted Christian could enter into the unpardonable sin. On page 35 he wrote: "The converted Christian can *lose* the presence of God's Spirit by CONTINUED NEGLECT. Neglect of prayer, neglect of Bible study, neglect of spiritual [interests]." We must seek those things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God, to be Christ's. We must set our affection on things above, not on things on the earth, to be Christ's (Colossians 3:1–2). There are conditions for us to perform. We must be fulfilling God's will.

Reason Number Two

Reason number two: God has not forgiven you because you have failed to forgive others. We need God's forgiveness to be healed.

Jesus Christ's teaching on prayer in Matthew 6:12 reads: "And forgive us our debts [our faults and sins], as we forgive our debtors [those who commit sins and faults against us]." There are two conditions to receiving forgiveness and healing from God. The first condition is that we repent—meaning change! The second condition is that we forgive others. God only forgives us as we forgive others (Mark 11:24–26). It is impossible to be forgiven unless we forgive others. This is God's absolute requirement. When we forgive others, it has nothing to do with whether or not they repent. That sin is between that person and God. God requires that we forgive others whether they are sorry for it or not. When we forgive others, it has nothing to do with whether or not they are forgiven by God. Forgiving another has nothing to do with whether or not you evaluate their repentance to be genuine. We must have a patient and ready-to-forgive attitude given to us by God through the power of His Holy Spirit. Forgiveness means we release the hurt, the pain, the anger, the torment we feel inside us caused by a person, regardless of how repentant we think they are. When we forgive others, nothing happens to them, but everything happens to us. We qualify for forgiveness from God and His healing.

Reason Number Three

Reason number three: God heals us according to His mercy, meaning, in His own timetable.

God's timetable can be instantaneous or, more commonly, a gap in time between the affliction and healing—or between sin and forgiveness. God tests our faith to see if it is dead or living, or to see if it is a counterfeit. He gives us time to examine ourselves—to look at cause and effect—to see if we are sane or insane in our obedience to the principles of healthful living. Why am I being afflicted? How can I change and put away the physical sin that brought upon me this affliction? What sin is defiling my body? God gives us time to confess and forsake our sin—to repent and change. God applies Christ's stripes as He sees repentance and change. God also tests the faith He has given us to see how we will exercise that faith. Will we trust and rely on God to heal us or will we go to doctors for help?

Reason Number Four

Reason number four: We have not repented of our physical sin. We refuse to give up the habits (improper rest, exercise and diet) which are causing the illness. When Christ said in John 5:14 to, "sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee," the condition of His command was obedience. Is obedience to God required for healing? Positively and emphatically, yes!

"If we confess our sins [ascending to God's way of thinking about our sins], he is faithful and just [true to His word] to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness [unhealthy living] (1 John 1:9). "Confess" (#3670 in *Thayers Concordance*) means change, remove, forsake. "He that covereth [refuses to acknowledge or confess] his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy [God's forgiveness when He responds positively to his affliction]" (Proverbs 28:13).

"To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the [Eternal] than sacrifice" (Proverbs 21:3). God is telling us here, that unquestioned obedience is more required—worthy of being accepted, pleasing, welcome—than repenting of your same old sins over and over and over (feeling sorry without genuine repentance and change). Christ did not allow himself to be beaten beyond recognition so that we can flaunt or dishonor His sacrifice, thinking that we can continue to live in physical sin and still be healed.

Notice what Christ is recorded as saying to His Father in Hebrews 10:5–6:

Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not [that is not what God really wanted], but a body hast thou prepared me [the Word came in the flesh]. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin [continual atonement] thou hast had no pleasure.

God wanted unquestioned obedience, first, last and always. God was not interested in unending repentance. He wanted man to "sin no more."

Christ said in Luke 13:3, 5, "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish [from sickness, disease and premature death]." Mr. Armstrong taught that if you want to be healed, you must also want to change. Healing, more often than not, is conditional on repentance and change. Obedience brings healing (Exodus 15:26).

Reason Number Five

Reason number five: A lack of proper living faith.

God will not heal us according to the faith we think we have, or wish we had, or want others to think we have, or that we should have. God is not fooled by our carnal human substitutes for faith. Sadly, most of God's people have been fooled by emotions, fears, hopes, self-righteousness, and wishes, that disguise themselves as faith. They think they have true living faith because they are unable to recognize Satan's counterfeits. They are able to recite the Bible definition of faith but fail to understand what faith is not. And the real tragedy occurs when these people with counterfeit faith meet trials and afflictions that demand true living faith, and instead of genuine faith they find only a poor substitute. The poor substitute quickly crumbles under the pressure of trials and afflictions and they are left with a professing dead faith. Such a person who finds his false faith crumbling beneath him quickly learns about his lack of healing, or "saving faith" the hard way—through much suffering.

But there is a better way to learn. That way is to stir up God's Holy Spirit every day through the use of His spiritual tools so God will help us recognize how deceitful our human nature is. That way we can identify the false substitutes for faith before they take root and block the growth of real, true, living faith.

What is the faith required to be healed—to receive God's healing benefits? Is it not the same faith that is required to be saved? Faith establishes the law. Romans 3:31 says: "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid [perish the thought]: yea, we establish the law." *Establish* means to set up, institute, enact, fix as a standard, God's law. Do we fix as a standard God's law so that by the deeds of the law we can be justified in God's sight? ". . . for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20). God's law is a spiritual mirror. But simply by the use of that mirror no dirty face is washed clean. But do you throw your mirror away because your face is not washed by it? Why is your face not washed clean by the mirror? Because by the mirror comes the knowledge of the dirt. By God's law of love comes the knowledge of sin. The purpose of the law is not to forgive, to justify, to wash away, or to cleanse. Only the blood of Christ can do that. The law is to tell us what sin is. By looking at the law or keeping it, no dirt is washed from our hearts. Looking into the mirror will not cleanse sin already there. The deeds of God's law of love do not remove sins that are past. They are removed by the law of faith in Christ's shed-blood sacrifice. By living God's law (His

commandments), we receive faith from God to receive His promises. When we fail to live God's law of love, we will not receive the faith to be saved. You will receive a counterfeit faith. The same is true in receiving God's healing benefits. Faith establishes God's laws of health and Mr. Armstrong made it very clear what those principles of healthful living are: proper diet, rest, and exercise.

Now let us take the spiritual principles above and apply them directly to physical health and healing. Do we fix as a standard God's *health* laws so that by the deeds of God's *health* laws we can be justified in His sight? For by the law (God's health laws) is the knowledge of physical sin. God's health law (His principles of healthful living) is a mirror. By the use of that mirror no diseased body is made whole. But do you throw your mirror away because your body is not healed by it? Why is your body not made whole by the mirror? Because by the mirror comes the knowledge of unhealthy living. By God's health laws come the knowledge of physical sin. The purpose of God's health laws is not to forgive, to justify, or make our body whole. Only the stripes of Christ can do that. God's health laws have been revealed to tell us what physical sin is. By looking at God's health laws and living by His principles of healthful living, no sick or diseased body is made whole. Looking into the mirror will not remove the sickness or disease already there. The deeds of God's health laws do not remove physical sins that are past. They are removed by the law of faith in Christ's broken body. By living God's health laws we receive faith from God to receive His healing benefits. When we fail to establish and live by God's health laws, we will not receive the faith to be healed. Therefore, faith is likened unto the healing doctrines we were given. Faith to receive God's healing benefits comes when we put those doctrines into practice.

Faith Is Easy to Define

The Bible tells us that faith is simply the belief that God exists and that He will do what He, in His Word, says He will do. Hebrews 11:6 says: "But without faith [faith that establishes God's spiritual laws and physical health laws] it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him [by living the laws that please Him]." Faith is confidently knowing that God will do what He says He will do, when He says He will do it. Romans 4:21 says: "And being fully persuaded [convinced] that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform." And we can become fully convinced after we live God's spiritual and physical laws.

This faith—this real, saving, healing, living faith—comes only from God through the continuous use of His spiritual tools, and establishing His laws. God rewards you with faith as you diligently seek Him in hearing and studying His revealed Word (Romans 10:17) through prayer, meditation, and much fasting. Faith is a gift only God can give and it in no way comes, in any part or fragment, from our own carnal nature or attitudes (Ephesians 2:8). Our human

nature wants us to believe that faith is a gift we can receive in an instant or something you exercise for only a brief moment while you pray.

God's end-time apostle taught that we must have faith and keep on having faith, and trusting God, and relying upon Him, until He performs what He promised. Faith is simple reliance upon God's Word. Faith is the ingredient you must exercise until God heals you. It is an ingredient you receive only as you use His spiritual tools and establish His spiritual and physical laws. Faith comes through much prayer and Bible study. If you lack faith, it may be that you are lacking in continuous prayer and Bible study or in establishing God's way of life through His spiritual and physical laws. True living faith is a gift God wants to give you because it is necessary to fulfill the healing and salvation process. Neglect of prayer and Bible study and establishing God's laws will only produce a counterfeit faith. And all counterfeit faiths have two deadly things in common: First, none of them fool God. And second, all of them can fool us when we function on our own righteousness. Our own righteousness as defined by Mr. Armstrong was that "righteousness" we supply in thinking we obey God's law of love while actually neglecting it. Faith is a product of the Holy Spirit, which God gives to those who obey Him. Obedience requires consent for God's spiritual and physical health laws to reign supreme in our lives. Are we obeying God's physical laws as well as His spiritual ones? True living faith depends on it. Faith, without continuous self-examination through the use of God's spiritual tools, is dead.

Two Kinds of Faith

In James 2:14–26, two kinds of faith are described. One is a professing dead faith and the other is a saving, living faith. James retorts that the kind of faith that does not produce works is not a saving or a healing faith. That is because by works—by living according to God's health laws (His principles of healthful living) and His law of love—faith is made perfect. Most of God's people have never really understood the difference or have forgotten. What is the difference? Here is an example: A high-wire acrobat secured a wire high above Niagara Falls. His question to his audience was, "How many of you believe (have the faith) that I can wheel this wheelbarrow across the falls on this tight wire?" All were filled with disbelief. But that all changed when this acrobat demonstrated how it could be done. They saw and had faith. He exercised their faith to believe by works. But their faith was dead. No action on their part was required. They all had a professing dead faith.

The next question that was asked by this high wire acrobat was this: "Would you like to give your faith life?" Everyone's overall response was, "Yes." He replied, "Then, get into the wheelbarrow!" Most of God's people lacked the works required for true living faith. Faith has to be exercised by works (the works of establishing God's spiritual and physical laws) to give it life. The true, living faith God imparts is based on conditions. It is based on a continuous

relationship between you and your Creator—constant, intimate contact with Him. It has to do with your continuous track record of trust—of experiencing Christ living His life in you. Living faith involves being God-centered—walking with Him—day by day throughout your life. You must constantly be, ". . . building up yourselves on your most holy faith" (Jude 20). Get in the wheelbarrow!

The antidote to a professing dead faith is works. Faith is often undermined by our wandering from God. Faith can be undermined through trials and afflictions when it is our *own* faith. Living faith is an ongoing, uninterrupted relationship with God—a constant daily contact with God in prayer, Bible study, meditation, and fasting often. Living faith is a gift God gives you as you use these spiritual tools. When you exercise God's faith, it will grow stronger like a muscle that is developed. The key is, our spirit has to combine with God's Spirit to have living faith. God's Holy Spirit manifests within us the living faith to be healed and saved as we seek His righteousness—as we allow ourselves in obedience to God's commands to become His own spiritual creation. Faith is a power God places within us to reproduce Himself and to heal us. And God's Spirit influences us to exercise that power so it will grow to fulfill His purpose. Living faith or the faith Christ had cannot be worked up. It is a gift God gives us as we do His will. And His will is that we "sin no more"—physically or spiritually—and maintain a continuous, intimate relationship with Him. Godly faith is what God gives us to bring us to His own state of perfection. And it is *always* God's will to heal us so we can fulfill that process. But healing is conditional. Physical health and spiritual maturity is a blessing God gives us when we learn and change through our trials and afflictions.

Reason Number Six

Reason number six: "My grace is sufficient for thee."

When we fulfill all the conditions that God requires for us to be healed and we still are not healed, God's answer may be that His grace is sufficient for you. Why? That answer can be found in 2 Corinthians 12:5–10. Paul had a non-life-threatening affliction. He pleaded with God three times for healing, but God said to him: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." God knew that upon giving Paul vision and revelation, he was in danger of falling into the snare of spiritual pride. So there was given to Paul a thorn in the flesh (some physical affliction) to deflate any tendency toward exaltation or an arrogant attitude. No doubt God purposely chose not to reveal exactly what the thorn was so that afflicted saints down through time might feel a closer kinship with the Apostle Paul as they suffer. In one sense it represented an effort on Satan's part to hinder Paul in the work of God. But in another sense God used the thorn as a divine deterrent or spiritual remedy to keep Paul humble. What God was telling Paul in his plea for healing was, "I will not remove the thorn, but I will do something better: I will give you grace to bear it. And just remember, Paul, that although I have not given

you what you asked for, yet I am giving you what you need most deeply. You want My power and strength to accompany your effort in doing My work, don't you? Well, the best way to have that happen is for you to be kept in a place of weakness."

Meekness (humility) is a fruit of God's spiritual endowment that God gives us through afflictions. Afflictions are given for our physical and spiritual benefit. That is why Paul gloried in his infirmities (his afflictions, his weaknesses, his distresses) so that the power of Christ (God's Holy Spirit) would rest upon him.

Fulfilling Conditions for Forgiveness

So the question is not, does God always heal? The question is, are we fulfilling the conditions that qualify us for God's forgiveness and His healing benefits? When we convert (turn around) to do God's will, He will most assuredly heal us of any life-threatening sickness or disease so we can fulfill His purpose. Our responsibility is to "be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:17). Real healing is forgiving physical sin and removing the penalty by applying Christ's stripes. It is a most serious thing, not to be taken lightly by turning God's anointing ceremony into a ritual by flaunting (dishonoring) Christ's sacrifice—thinking we can continue in sin and still be healed. Forgiveness and healing come when we forsake physical sin by establishing and living God's health laws.

Here is what Mr. Armstrong said again in his December 1967, *Personal from the Editor*:

Real healing by God's power is a matter of FORGIVING SIN—sin against the physical body. Read Luke 5:18–26. None but God can forgive sin (verse 21). Doctors, therefore, CANNOT HEAL. They can work *with* nature's laws—but that is not HEALING.

Do we, then, advise people *against* going to medical doctors? By NO MEANS. Doctors have their place in this world. But the healing that God performs is NOT OF THIS WORLD.

I have answered the call of thousands, who have come to me for prayer for healing. Many *have* been healed—miraculously—of even cancer and an advanced case, in a hospital, of leukemia. On the other hand, many *have not* been healed. Yet I have prayed with the same faith for the one as the other.

Why are many not healed? Jesus said it is ACCORDING TO YOUR FAITH. Perhaps they did not fully believe. Perhaps they were not obedient. Perhaps they should read James 4:3, where it says: "Ye ask, and receive not, *because . . .*"

". . . because you ask amiss [wrongly, with an improper intent], that you may consume it [your object of prayer—God's healing] upon your lusts." Meaning: "Upon your own pleasures as you continue to allow your faulty diets to rule and your passionate sensual desire to seek the treasures and pleasures of this world so that it is impossible for you to get to know Me."

Could anything give God more sadness than to see His people suffer and die prematurely from sickness and disease, when they are caught up to their eyeballs in physical sin and they just will not change—even when they know the truth. When you come before God for healing and refuse to change by establishing God's health laws (His principles of healthful living), you just turn the whole anointing ceremony into a ritual that goes nowhere. And it has happened year after year after year among God's people—and it must stop if we want to be healed. We must hate physical sin—our faulty diets, improper rest, and exercise.

God vs. Doctors

If truly, ill health stems from curses precipitated or brought on by God because we have transgressed His spiritual and physical health laws, then can the medical profession of this world heal us? Never! I have been concerned—deeply concerned—with the direction that many of God's people have taken for years now towards the medical profession. I believe that most of God's called of this age have now lost their confidence and faith in God as their healer. How? By failing to establish God's laws and principles of healthful living as taught by God's end-time apostle. Faith is established only as we live God's spiritual and physical health laws.

Am I saying that the medical profession cannot give us help and relief when it is legitimate and right (setting a bone, stitching a wound, restorative dental care, eyeglasses)? They have performed brilliant things, but did that take away the cause of the problem? No! Man's medical system is Satan's counterfeit to God's promise to heal. Then what is it that is going on in this world, except to find a solution around the principles of healthful living? There is no cure there. Why? Because healing cure is of God when we live His spiritual and physical laws. This world and most of God's people are going to have to learn that lesson the hard way—through much pain and affliction and premature death. God's healing cure is made available to us when we build up our most holy faith by establishing and living God's laws of health—the principles of healthful living. When we do that, our faith can be made perfect (James 3:22) so we can claim God's healing benefits.

Mr. Armstrong said the followers of Christ are to be different. God expects us to deal with the cause of sickness and disease. Through Satan's cunning craftiness he has deceived us in diet. Our faulty diets are of this world and God commands us to "Love not the world [its lustful desires], neither the things [including its faulty diet] that are in the world" (1 John 2:15). Whether it is possible to find nutritious food in this polluted environment is not the issue here. We can all improve our health by exercising more care in the principles of healthful living.

Christ knew what physical sin could do to the health of all people. That is why God wants us to hate physical sin—our faulty diets, our inactivity, and our improper rest. God wants us to hate what physical sin has done to the health of this nation and God's own church. He wants you to be concerned with what it can do to your health on the installment plan and the future health of your children. He wants us to stand against faulty diets, which defile our bodies. Wives, you control the food in your homes. You are responsible for seeing that your husbands and children are fed properly. And husbands! You are the head of the woman, so you are responsible for seeing that your wives are doing just that.

God blesses us for observing the laws of health. Why should we think healthy, vibrant living is impossible? Health and healing are within our reach if we will only live the principles of healthful living. It only takes effort on our part to learn and to act on what we have come to understand to be true about physical sin.

Your servant in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert J. Litz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "R" and "L".

Robert J. Litz