



God has placed each part in the body just as he wanted it to be.

— 1 Corinthians 12:18 (NIRV)



Adult Bible Study: Part 3

In the past two sessions, we have looked at how the Old Testament treated disability and disease and contrasted this with the healing outreach that was a large part of Jesus' earthly ministry. We identified the Old Testament's emphasis on prevention rather than healing, and observed that this often led to the isolation of the affected individual. We also noticed that Jesus never refused to heal those who approached him, never made demands of them or imposed conditions, and that forgiveness of sin was often a part of the cure. Jesus' healing events were a picture of God's perfect grace, his power acting as he wills without human participation.

Visit [John 1:14-18](#) and [Acts 20:24](#)

If you count them up, there are over 40 healing accounts in the four gospels, and we can be sure that many more went unrecorded. Still, we can be certain is that disease and disability did not vanish during Jesus' years on earth. This opinion is supported by the fact that the Apostles continued a healing ministry after Jesus' ascension, and because we still experience these things first hand.

“Even when I get really sick, my friend Angelo visits me. Sometimes he comes to the hospital. He even shakes my hand.” —Juan

Read [Luke 13:10–17](#). (Visit [Mark 7:31–37](#), [Luke 7: 1–17](#), [Luke 8: 40–56](#).)

1. *What was the woman's disability in this passage? How long had she had her disability? To whom did Jesus attribute her disability? If Satan was present and powerful while Jesus was walking the earth, what does that tell us about our situation? The woman in this scene did not ask to be healed. Why did Jesus heal her? What lesson was Jesus trying to teach the leader of the synagogue?*

I have always been unable to see. I don't know life any differently. Sometimes people say that I am 'missing so much.' How can I miss something that I have never known before? Maybe there is something in my life that they are missing. Should I be constantly reminding them of that?"
—Kenneth

In the past sessions we have learned that the Hebrew worldview included a belief that disease and disability were retribution, or punishment, for individual sin. Revisit [John 9:1–6](#).

2. Does Jesus' response to the disciples' question support this belief?

Return to [Luke 13](#) and read [verses 1–5](#).

Although this passage does not speak directly to disease or disability, it does speak to human suffering.

Adult Bible Study: Part 3

3. How does Jesus' statement here relate to the passages that we have just considered?

Focus on verses 3 and 5.

4. What is Jesus' central message in his response to the question asked?

Read **Luke 4:18–21**. (In Luke 4, Jesus is reading from Isaiah. See **Isaiah 61:1–2**.)

5. How did Jesus' healing miracles fulfill this prophecy from Isaiah?

Reconsider the woman in the synagogue that we read about in Luke 13.

6. What spiritual language did Jesus use that is connected to this Old Testament reading?

It is apparent that we should no longer consider disease and disability as retribution against the individual sinner, but rather, as a constant reminder that we live in a sinful world and are subject to its power and influence. Jesus came to free us from this bondage, but full freedom will not be realized until his permanent kingdom is established on his return. While Jesus was on earth we were given a glimpse of the Messianic kingdom, what we call the Kingdom of God, that is to come. His healing miracles were only a foretaste of his perfect creation, his heavenly kingdom which he has already established. Until that time, life continues with its suffering and struggles.

It is best not to use the words suffer, ailment, illness or defect when referring to a person who has intellectual or developmental disabilities. Unlike diseases, his disability is a part of who he is; it is not caused by an outside agent, nor is it curable.

7. Discuss the differences between viewing sin as retribution and the actual consequences of sin.

Did you know that one of the greatest theologians of all time had a disability? Next session we will look at what the Apostle Paul has to say about church unity and the partnership between the weak and the strong. If you would like to read ahead, look at **1 Corinthians 12**.

"Not a day goes by when someone doesn't comment about my face or stare or point at me. People laugh at me all the time. It's like they think I can't hear them. Maybe they just don't care if I hear them. Maybe they think it doesn't matter if I hear them." —Emily