

# Faith and Healing



## SABBATH—MAY 1

**READ FOR THIS WEEK’S LESSON:** Genesis 3:8–10; Psalm 118:6; Proverbs 17:22; Matthew 6:27–34; Hebrews 13:6; 1 John 4:18.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “ ‘Lord, you will give perfect peace to anyone who commits himself to be faithful to you. That’s [That is] because he trusts in you’ ” (Isaiah 26:3, NIV).

**A PATIENT BELIEVED THAT HE WAS UNDER AN EVIL SPELL.** He came to a doctor with an unknown disease. The doctor placed in front of the patient two glass tubes. One was filled with hydrogen peroxide. And the other was with plain water. They both looked almost the same. The doctor then drew blood from the patient and mixed it with the hydrogen peroxide. The mixture quickly started to bubble and fizz. The patient believed that it was the work of the evil spell.

The doctor then gave the patient a simple saline (salt) shot. The doctor told the patient that this would break the spell. After a while, the doctor drew blood from the patient again and mixed it with the plain water in the other glass. There was no bubbling or fizzing. It was the “proof” that the spell was broken. The patient left feeling cured. The patient was so impressed that he brought all his friends to the doctor to be “cured” too.

Of course, this man was never under a spell. But this story shows how powerful an influence<sup>1</sup> our minds have on our bodies. It is the subject for this week’s lesson.

**To view and/or download a Hope Channel show on this week’s lesson, visit [www.lifesbeat.org](http://www.lifesbeat.org).**

1. influence—to have power, or an effect, over persons or things.

**SUNDAY—MAY 2****THE FEAR FACTOR  
(Genesis 3:8–10)**

For a few seasons, television viewers were watching a show called *Fear Factor*. In this show, contestants<sup>2</sup> would be put in different scary situations. It could be sitting in a pit filled with scorpions or rats. Or it could be walking through a building on fire to find out how well these contestants could deal with fear.

Of course, life in this sinful world is full of things that cause us to be afraid. There was a seventeenth-century British political<sup>3</sup> thinker named Thomas Hobbes. He wrote that fear was the chief reason that humans (people) created governments. They did so for the main purpose of protecting us against those who would do us harm. It does not matter who we are. It does not matter where we live. It does not matter how good and safe we might feel. We all face things that cause us to fear.

But fear is not always bad.

**How can fear help protect us? What things should we be afraid of?**

Fear is a natural and necessary emotion. It helps humans deal with danger and helps them survive (live). This emotion is necessary in a world

full of accidents, crime, disease, terrorism,<sup>4</sup> and war.



**Fear helps us deal with danger and helps us survive.**

**What can we learn about fear from the Bible's first lesson in Genesis 3:8–10?**

Sure, there are many things to make us afraid in this world. So often we find ourselves fearing things that never happen. But fear is a very stressful emotion. It can steal a lot of energy from our bodies. In other words, fear is not just limited to what it does to our minds. It can have a very harmful effect (result) on the health of our bodies. No matter who we are or where we live, fear is an ever-present part of our lives. The question for us should be, How are we to deal with it?

**What are your fears? How have they influenced<sup>5</sup> your life? How**

2. contestants—persons who take part in an event in which each person tries to win by doing something better than the others.

3. political—having to do with ruling a country, or a state; having to do with a government.

4. terrorism—violent or destructive acts committed by groups to create fear in people or a government.

5. influenced—to have power, or an effect, over persons or things.

**can you profit from the promises of God in dealing with things that make you afraid?**

### MONDAY—MAY 3

#### A MAN SAID TO THE UNIVERSE<sup>6</sup> (Psalm 118:6)

A man said to the universe:

“Sir I live!”

“But,” answered the universe,

“That fact does not mean

I owe you anything.”

—Stephen Crane, adapted

**Read the poem above. What is the message there? How should we, as Seventh-day Adventist Christians, be different in our opinion of our place in the universe? What is the main reason for that difference?**

Think for a moment: suppose there were no God, no Creator, who made us. Suppose, instead, we are what many people think we are, highly advanced apes, nothing more. Suppose that we are just creatures (people) who come from apes in a godless universe that cares nothing about us at all. Suppose we were at the mercy of<sup>7</sup> mindless things that have no interest or concern about us or our well-being. What kind of world would that be?

But, that is not what we as Christians believe. Instead, we believe that God

created us, supports us, and cares for us. Because of this, we of all people should be able to deal with the fears and troubles that bother all people.

**What hope and comfort, even during fearful times, can you learn from these verses: Psalm 118:6; Proverbs 3:5, 6; Luke 12:6, 7; Romans 8:38, 39; Hebrews 13:6; 2 Timothy 1:7; 1 John 4:18?**

We as Christians face a scary world out there. This is a world where anything can happen. But with our knowledge of God, we have a background to help us better understand the world.

So, we can have hope and comfort even during the most troublesome times. This does not mean we do not face bad things, or things that can make us afraid. Instead, it means that we have a firm foundation<sup>8</sup> upon which to deal with those fears.

### TUESDAY—MAY 4

#### THE POWER OF FAITH (Proverbs 17:22)

**What does Proverbs 17:22 tell us about the connection between the mind and the body?**

A young child lay dying in a hospital bed. His teacher visited him and gave him some schoolwork to do. The teacher said, “Michael, here

6. universe—all the matter (things), light, and energy (forces in nature that do work) that have been discovered (found) or that we know of.

7. at the mercy of—to have no protection against someone or something that could cause you harm.

8. foundation—the basis on which an idea or belief rests.

are lessons on verbs<sup>9</sup> and adverbs.<sup>10</sup> Do the best you can.” The teacher knew that it probably was useless to give the child schoolwork because the child seemed so tired, so empty, so resigned<sup>11</sup> to death. But, right after that, the child bounced back. At first he did not feel well. It was not expected that he would live. But everything changed, and the child now seemed to be getting better. Somebody asked the boy about what happened, about why the schoolwork seemed to have changed him so much. The boy answered, “They would not give a dying boy work on adverbs and verbs, would they?”

No question, the connection between our minds, our feelings, and our bodies is very powerful. Science does not fully understand how that connection works. But it knows that the connection is there. The connection can make a world of difference in our overall health.

And here is where faith in God and trust in His love and goodness can make such a difference. How much easier it is for us to be calmer and less stressed when we know that God’s love and care are real! Studies from around the world have shown that religious faith helps people have better health. Those who believe in God live longer, suffer less depression (sadness), and deal better emotionally with terrible events. We certainly cannot rule out the miraculous<sup>12</sup>

9. verbs—words that show action.

10. adverbs—words that describe verbs (action word), adjectives (word that describes something), or other adverbs, or sentences that are often used to show time, manner, place, or degree (how much).

11. resigned—feeling or showing acceptance that something unpleasant will happen or will not change.

12. miraculous—very wonderful or amazing like a miracle.

13. surrender—to give the control or use of something to someone else.

14. stressing out—feeling the pressure of fear or worry.

power of God to bring healing in our lives. But peace, faith, and hope can improve the overall health of those who believe in and trust God. A merry heart can be like medicine (Proverbs 17:22).

**In Matthew 6:27–34, what is Jesus saying to us? How can these words comfort you in your fear and worry now? Are any of those fears too great for the Lord to handle? Is anyone out of the loving reach of God? How can you learn to surrender<sup>13</sup> these fears to the Lord and have the peace that He promises?**



A merry heart can be like medicine.

### WEDNESDAY—MAY 5

#### STRESSING OUT<sup>14</sup> (Romans 15:13)

**Can you do a better job of claiming the promises in Romans 15:13?**

### What feelings or actions are holding you back?

One of the greatest health challenges we all face has to do with stress.<sup>15</sup> It does not have to be over the big events in life. But stress deals with life itself, with the daily pressures that we so often face.

Doctors report that up to 90 percent of patients come to them with stress-related complaints. Science has shown that when we are stressed, our hormones<sup>16</sup> can influence different organs<sup>17</sup> in our bodies. Over long periods of time, the organs can be made weaker by these hormones. Then these weak organs may be affected by disease. For example, stress can cause adrenaline<sup>18</sup> to make the heart beat faster and more powerfully. This leads the heart to beat irregularly. Some stress hormones cause the blood vessels to become smaller, causing high blood pressure. Stress can cause shallow and rapid breathing. Stress can cause the blood to flow away from the stomach, which causes digestive<sup>19</sup> problems. (Who has not felt what fear, anxiety, and worry can do to the stomach?) Stress can cause an increase in blood sugar levels, which can lead to diabetes.<sup>20</sup> Stress also is known to have a nega-

tive influence on our sleep. Then the lack of sleep can have a negative influence on our overall health. Stress also can negatively influence our immune system,<sup>21</sup> which is our body's frontline defense against disease.



**Some stress hormones cause the blood vessels to become smaller, causing high blood pressure.**

The list can go on and on. And so the point should be clear. We need to learn to control stress. Here is where faith in God can play such an important part. When we experience that God's love is real, it can have such a calming effect (result) on us. It can greatly lessen stress and the negative health results that often follow it.

**Just being religious is not the answer. What is most important is**

15. stress—a state of mental tension and worry caused by problems in your life, work, or other areas.

16. hormones—natural substances produced in the body that influence (affect) the way the body grows or develops.

17. organs—parts of the body, such as the heart or liver, that have special functions (jobs).

18. adrenaline—a substance that is released in the body of a person who is feeling a strong emotion (such as excitement, fear, or anger) and that causes the heart to beat faster and gives the person more energy.

19. digestive—of or relating to the process by which food is changed to a simple form after it is eaten.

20. diabetes—a serious disease in which the body cannot properly control the amount of sugar in the blood because it does not have enough insulin (a substance that the body makes and uses to turn sugar into energy).

21. immune system—the part of the body that fights disease and prevents disease or infection from entering the body.

having a personal relationship with Jesus. We need to know for ourselves His love and care. This can be done through daily reading of the Bible and through prayer. We need to talk to the Lord as if we were talking with a friend. We need to think deeply about His character<sup>22</sup> as shown in nature and the Bible. How much time do you spend getting to know the Lord for yourself? Might you need to spend a little more time with your Lord and Maker?

#### THURSDAY—MAY 6

### FAITH AND MIRACULOUS HEALING (Matthew 12:9–13)

Even light reading of the Gospels<sup>23</sup> shows that much of Jesus' ministry<sup>24</sup> involved healing through miracles.<sup>25</sup> The sick, the blind, the dying, even the dead all were healed through the great power of the Lord. In many cases, faith is treated as a requirement for healing (Matthew 9:2, 22, 28, 29; Matthew 15:28).

In some cases, disbelief prevented healing, as in Nazareth (Matthew 13:58; Mark 6:5, 6). In one case when the disciples (followers of Jesus) were unable to heal someone, Jesus said it was because they did not believe (Matthew 17:14–20).

Faith is an important part in healing through miracles. For this reason some people believe that if healing through prayer fails, it is because the sick person does not have enough faith. But this is really a false understanding of faith and healing.

**Matthew 12:9–13; Luke 13:11–13; Luke 14:2–4; and Luke 22:47–52** tell how Jesus miraculously healed people. What do the verses say about the faith of those who were healed? What lessons can we learn from these examples?

None of these verses tell us about the faith of those who were healed. This is not to make the role of faith less important in miraculous healing. It is just to show that faith is not always a must!

We do not understand why in some cases there is clearly a miraculous example of the Lord's healing. But in other cases healing comes over time. But we rightly can believe that the hand of the Lord is working for the sick through both of these methods. And there always are those cases where, for reasons we do not understand, healing does not come as we have prayed for and would wish for. But the good news for us as Seventh-day Adventist Christians

22. (God's) character—who God is; having and understanding the character of God is the same as being kind, loving, honest, and so on. God's law (Ten Commandments) shows us His character.

23. Gospels—the first four books of the New Testament that tell the story of Jesus' life and His teachings. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are called the Gospels.

24. ministry—God's work in all areas; preaching, giving Bible studies, healing, helping the poor, the work of a pastor or an evangelist.

25. miracles—extraordinary (amazing; great) events believed to be a sign of the power of God. Examples of miracles are Peter's walking on water and Jesus' raising Lazarus from the dead.

is that, even in these cases, we still can trust in the love, mercy, and goodness of God.



Some people are healed quickly. In other cases, healing comes slowly. But we can believe the healing hand of the Lord is over them all.

**How can we learn to trust in the Lord and in His love for us even when prayers for health and healing have not been answered?**

### FRIDAY—MAY 7

**ADDITIONAL STUDY:** “In true science there can be nothing that goes against the teaching of the word of God. This is because both science and the Word [the Bible] have the same Author [God]. A correct understanding of both will always prove that they agree with each other. When we understand this, we should not fail to get God’s help through true science. This is a true example of His natural laws.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Testimonies*<sup>26</sup> for the Church, volume

8, page 258. Read also *The Ministry of Healing*, page 462; and *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*,<sup>27</sup> volume 12, pages 751–783.

“The connection between the mind and the body is very great. What happens to one also influences the other. The condition of the mind has much to do with the health of a person’s body. Suppose that the mind is free and happy, under a sense of right doing and satisfaction in causing happiness to others. Then it will create a cheerfulness that will influence the whole body. This causes the blood to flow more freely and the entire body to feel better. The blessing of God is a healer. Those who are good about helping others will know that wonderful blessing in their hearts and lives.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4 pages 60, 61; *Counsels on Stewardship*, pages 345, 346.

“We all desire immediate and direct answers to our prayers. We are tempted<sup>28</sup> to become discouraged when the answer is delayed or does not come as expected. But God is too wise and good to answer our prayers always at just the time and in just the way we desire. He will do more and better for us than to just obey all our wishes. And because we can trust His wisdom and love, we should not ask Him to surrender<sup>29</sup> to our will. Instead, we should try to enter into and obey His purpose. Our desires and interests should be dedicated [given] to

26. *Testimonies*—the writings of Ellen G. White.

27. theology—the study of God and religion.

28. tempted—to experience the desire to do, think, feel, or say what is wrong.

29. surrender—giving one’s whole life to Jesus to love and serve Him and to obey His holy law.

His will [plan]. These experiences that test faith are for our good. By them it is made clear whether our faith is true and trustworthy. Faith should depend on the word of God alone. If it depends on what happens, then it is uncertain and changeable. Faith is made stronger by using it. We must let patience have its perfect work. We need to remember that there are important promises in the Bible for those who depend on the Lord.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, pages 230, 231.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

❶ What is the work of medical science in the healing of the Christian? If

we try to get health and healing from medical science, does it mean we do not have faith in God? Discuss your answers with your class.

❷ What has been your own personal experience about the connection between your feelings and the health of your body? What have you learned from your own experience that you could share with others? How might your experiences help them better use the power of the mind to help the body be more healthy?

❸ Do you know someone in your church who is sick and in need of healing? How can you help that person get better or healed?