



Sermon Series Notes

A Biblical Evaluation of *A More Excellent Way To Be In Health* by Henry Wright
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Let me begin by saying that I will not take the time to go over all that we disagree with in this book. That would take several weekends of messages. Let me also say that we are not rejecting everything said in the book. There is an element of truth in some of this teaching. However, as a whole it is just simply not sound doctrine.

I. MAJOR FLAWS

A. Basic Premise Of The Book: Healing Is In The Atonement

- * Since healing is in the atonement, God's desire and design is that not only can every Christian be healed, but if we follow the principles laid out by Henry Wright, we won't get sick.
- * "God's perfect will is not to heal you. God's perfect will in the Word is that you do not get sick." (p.6, bottom)
- * "God's perfect will is not to heal you; His perfect will is that you do not get sick." (p.12)
- * "In fact, the basic principles that, when applied, will move the hand of God to heal, are the same principles that, when applied, will prevent disease." (p.11, bottom)
- * "The principles you apply to your life that will move the hand of God to heal you in covenant are the same principles that will, if you apply them to your life, prevent disease in your life." (p.31)
- * Certainly healing is in the atonement, but the Bible does not teach that all the benefits of the atonement will be effectual in this life. We live in a cursed world, and we dwell in bodies that have sin flowing through its members. Matthew 8:16-17, when taken within the context of the NT, does not suggest that Jesus' healing

ministry in His first coming means that God intends for all to be healed *in this life*, but rather is a specific fulfillment to a specific prophecy (Isa.53:4). Jesus' healing ministry was one of the many signs that He is indeed the Messiah (see also Luke 7:18-23). It is also prophetic of the future day when all sickness, disease, and death will be no more (Rev.21:4). There are other things accomplished through the atonement of Christ's sacrifice on the cross that have their fulfillment in a yet future time. For example, my victory over death as a Christian (resurrection) is in the atonement, but because my body has not yet been redeemed, if Jesus tarries, I will one day die. The bible teaches that the reconciliation of "all things" is in the atonement, but until Jesus comes again this present world (like our bodies) will continue to decay (Rom.8:18-25; II Cor.4:16; 5:1-4). Complete victory (in every way) is certainly in the atonement, yet practically speaking victory is not "complete" in this present life (Heb.2:5-9).

* Note: We believe God heals today, however, the ultimate fulfillment of healing in the atonement will not be experienced until our bodies are redeemed, and we long eagerly for that day. Come quickly Lord Jesus.

* Note: The context of I Peter 2:24 is not physical healing at all, but the healing of our souls. This is also the context of Psalm 103:3.

B. Arguments For Healing Are Based On The Old Covenant

* Mr. Wright argues from Deut.28 and Exodus 15. These are connected with the Covenant of Law, and that covenant was based on obedience.

* "Every time you step outside of the covenant, you open yourself up to the law and the penalty of the law."

* "I also believe God cannot heal, he will not heal, unless we measure up to His standard of holiness." (p.59)

* "In Deuteronomy 28...God said: If you do this, then I'll do this, but if you do not, then all these curses shall come upon you...There are conditions to healing...The condition is obedience to God." (p.76, top & middle)

* "When you are obedient to God, you have psychological and biological health. The fruit of obedience is health. The fruit of disobedience is disease." (p.125)

* "When we get the dead works out of our life, then the diseases that were headed our way won't come." (p.129, bottom)

* “I believe healing and deliverance come are a direct result of sanctification.”
(p.303, middle)

* See Jer.31:31-32; Col.2:13-15; Rom.3:20; Gal.3:10; Rom.3:21-28; John 1:16-17. Though Mr. Wright says he believes in the grace of God for salvation, he repeatedly states that healing is dependent on obedience (pp.6, bottom, 51, bottom, 59, red underline, 60, bottom, 76, 85, red underline, 89, 125, top, 129, bottom). If my salvation and righteousness before God are based completely on grace, mercy, and a free gift, why is my physical healing dependent on obedience?

* The majority of people Jesus healed, as well as recorded healings in the book Acts, had no prerequisite of obedience. The healing of the paralytic by the Pool of Bethesda is one very interesting example, because it says Jesus healed the man first, later found him at the temple, and warned him to stop sinning lest something worse happen to him (John 5, note verse 14).

* Mr. Wright also argues for generational curses based on Exodus 20:5. He says “This Scripture becomes the spiritual basis for all spiritual, biological and genetically inherited diseases.” (p.81). “Some people have disease resulting from their ancestor’s sin issue. We all carry the biological or spiritual results of our ancestors’ participation with the enemy.” (p.124).

* First of all, Exodus 20:5 does not at all mean what Henry Wright suggests. The punishment on future generations is tied to the breaking of the second commandment (idolatry), and refers to “those who hate me.” The great contrast in the verse is “but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me...” Whatever one believes about the punishment being passed on to future generations, the Bible is abundantly clear that it does not mean I will suffer for the sins of my ancestors, unless of course I continue in idolatry and rebellion. If I do, I will suffer the same punishment for my rebellion as they did for theirs (Deut.24:16; Jer.31:29-30; Ezekiel 18:1-4). Even if what Henry Wright says were true, and Ex.20:5 refers to generational curses beyond my control, there is no New Testament reference to generational curses. As a matter of fact, the New Testament is emphatic that for those who have received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, any aspect of a curse under the Law has been completely eliminated (Gal.3:13).

C. Terrible Distortion of Scripture

* Henry Wright repeatedly suggests that much of our problems have to do with fear. For example, he says that it was Job’s fear that opened the door for Satan to afflict him (pp. 94-95, 307, 344). This is absolutely out of line with Scripture. The Bible says that Job was the most righteous man on the face of the earth, and that it

was God in His sovereign will that opened the door for Satan to afflict him, not his fear (See Job 1:1b; 2:3b, 10b).

* The suggestion that Paul's thorn in his flesh was a result of a carnal area in his life that he had never gotten control over is also at odds with the natural understanding of the text (pp.95-97). Paul is stating what every Christian struggles with (sin), because it still dwells in the members of our bodies (Rom.7:7-8:4; James 3:2). Never does any Scripture indicate that Paul's thorn was a result of some sin issue that he had not adequately dealt with. As a matter of fact, it says just the opposite (II Cor.12:7-10). The word for infirmities is used many times for sickness, disease, or affliction. *It is the same word used in Matthew 8:17.*

* Based on Henry Wright's teaching, Timothy's "oft infirmities" were the direct result of his lack of sanctification/obedience. But Paul's testimony about Timothy was just the opposite (see Phil.2:20-22).

* Additional thoughts: It was because of an illness that a door opened for Paul to share the gospel with the Galatians (Gal.4:13). II Tim.4:20 records that Paul left Trophimus (ministry associate) sick in Miletus. Phil.2:25-27 says that another ministry associate of Paul's, Epaphroditus, was sick and almost died. Paul describes Epaphroditus as a "fellow worker...and soldier." Despite their commitment to Christ and the cause of His kingdom, these servants suffered physical infirmities, and there is not one reference that the reason was because they were not obedient or sanctified. The biblical evidence is just the opposite. None of the saints recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, or the book of Acts ever measured up to the teachings of Henry Wright. Only one person has measured up, and His name is Jesus.

* "In Psalm 90, God, through Moses, prophesied that your lifetime should be 70-80 years. Anything less than that is a curse." (p.67).

* "Anything less than 70-80 years of longevity on this planet is a curse." (p.341). This statement is based on a terrible distortion of Psalm 90:10. This psalm "is a Psalm about life and its brevity that uses an average age to express feelings about the shortness of life." (Elder Joe Harris)

* Finally, Henry Wright gives 30 spiritual blocks to healing, #16 being the most interesting to me. "The sixteenth block to healing is simply that our allotted time in life is fulfilled. You know, sometimes we just have to fade away; it is time to go." This to me is one of the most glaring errors of the book. It ignores the reason we die physically, which is clearly a result of SIN still dwelling in the members of our bodies (Gen.2:16-17; Rom.7:17-18, 23; I Cor.15:26-27a, 56-57; Heb.2:5-9).

* As a result of the many doctrinal errors contained in the teaching of Henry Wright, the leadership of CCSP will not permit the promotion of his teaching among the people God has called us to care for. So what does that mean practically speaking? It simply means that, if you adopt the doctrines espoused in “A More Excellent Way To Be In Health,” you cannot promote them here.

II. BIBLICAL REASONS FOR SICKNESS/DISEASE/AFFLICTION

A. Discipline As A Result Of Disobedience

* I Cor.11:27-32

B. Divine Sovereign Purpose Of God

1. For Paul it was to maintain humility/godly character/power of God upon his life.
2. For Job an adequate answer this side of heaven was never given

* I have known and continue to know many godly people who are suffering terribly, and this side heaven no one has an adequate answer.

C. Depravity of Man

* Depraved: Marked by corruption or evil (Rom.7:18)

INVITATION

* Some of us may be weak, and sick, and it is the direct result of disobedience. But let's understand we are not talking about disobedience to the Law, but to the Lord. And the way to get right is simply to come back to the cross.

* For some of us God has allowed a thorn in our flesh, it is painful, persistent, and we would love to have the Lord remove it from our lives. But that thorn, as painful as it is, is actually a blessing from God...

* And there may be a Job or two in this congregation. You have no idea why God has allowed the enemy to afflict you and your family. You have searched your heart, cried out to God, but up to this point there is no answer from heaven. You have a great challenge, and that is to trust Him when you cannot see Him, feel Him, and things in life make no sense...