

## **Do You Want to Be Healed?**

**By David Wright**

The author of the fourth Gospel recorded that by the sheep gate in Jerusalem was a pool called Bethesda (a Hebrew name meaning “house of grace”). This spring-fed pool in the northeast section of the city was believed to have healing properties. Lying near the water was “a multitude of invalids, blind, lame, paralyzed” (John 5:3). One man at Bethesda had been sick for 38 years (v. 5).

Jesus asked this man a very peculiar question: “Do you want to be healed?” (John 5:6). Of course the fellow wanted to be healed! Who would not jump at the chance to be made well after being an invalid for almost four decades?

Strange as it may seem, Jesus’ question isn’t off the mark. After long years of illness, sickness can become an integral part of self-identity. Furthermore, the prospect of suddenly becoming healthy can mean frightening new responsibilities. If healed, the man at Bethesda no longer has any excuse for depending on the charity of others. Instead of begging, he must now work with his own hands and support himself—something he has perhaps never done in his life.

The Lord’s question is also relevant for those struggling with emotional sickness. For instance, an adult with a childhood history of abuse may be reluctant to let go of the bitterness crippling him. Choosing to forgive a terrible wrong has wonderful healing power, but making this choice can be scary. It means viewing oneself and interacting with others in an entirely new way.

Do you want to be healed?

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