

AN INTRODUCTION TO
SPIRITUALITY,
HEALTH
&
HEALING

**The Pi Faith Factor and
How Prayer and Faith Helps**

PAUL PRITCHARD

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Introduction

We all are in search of healing at one time or another in our lives. Some of us spend our entire lives trying to find healing for something, some hurt, some memory, or some relationship.

In the summer of 2007 I had the opportunity to participate in the Clinical Applications Workshop on Spirituality & Healthcare presented by the Center for Spirituality, Theology and Health of Duke University Medical Center in North Carolina. It was the opportunity for me to confirm in part what I had already suspected through the first

five years of my healing ministry: Spirituality,
faith and prayer heals!

I have found healing to be a process that develops over time, instantly. It takes time to find the way, the reasons and the tools, but once we do, it happens instantly.

This book is developed from my own research and experience, counseling and praying with others for healing, of how God leads people through different stages of healing, together with hours upon hours of researching medical journals and publications since that first workshop.

There is now such an abundance of medical studies that clearly show that religion,

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spirituality and health are so interconnected that the Joint Commission for the Accreditation of Hospital Organizations (JCAHO) now requires that hospitals conduct a spiritual assessment of the patients upon intake.

Besides Duke University, there are many other institutions working in research in this area, including but not limited to, Harvard Spirituality and Healing Conferences, the Mayo Spiritual Care Conferences, and John Hopkins Spirituality and Aging Conferences, etc.

I hope this book will help you understand the four small but essential steps you can take to find healing, be it emotional, physical or spiritual.

It is a book about spirituality, health and healing, and therefore necessarily covers healing prayer. Incredibly there are only a few scientific research studies on the positive effects of healing prayer. There are however an abundance of published literature with testimonies on confirmed healings through healing prayer. The doctors will confirm the healing, just not how it happened. In this book you will also read about actual healings.

I have included, with their permission, brief testimonies given by a few of those who came to me in search of healing. To safeguard their anonymity their names have either been changed or just their initials given. We have a duty to let others know what God has done for us and through us.

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And He said to them, Go into the world and preach and publish openly the good news to every creature.

He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

And these attesting signs will accompany those who believe: In My name they will drive out demons; they will speak new languages; they will pick up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick and they will get well.

And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord kept working with them and confirming the message by the

attesting signs and miracles that closely accompanied.

Mark 16:15-18, 20 JB

I have made a point throughout the years that I have prayed for others, that whenever or whatever healing occurs, it is to God whom all the credit is due. It is just our part to be open to His grace and gifts.

My vision is a future where healers work side by side with the medical profession, each complimenting the other, allowing God to heal the whole person through their actions, beliefs and special gifts. And the future starts now!

The Pi Faith Factor

All the studies show that there are different levels of benefits from religion and spirituality when it comes to health and healing. The different levels are directly connected to with the levels and type of spirituality of the individual.

Starting with the non-religious/spiritual person, who in comparison with the those who participate in religious services, has no benefits, and both groups compared with people who have a positive intrinsic spirituality, who benefit greatly in terms of health and healing.

Compared with the other groups, studies show that those patients with a positive intrinsic religious spirituality:

- Are hospitalized much less often than others
- Are less prone to Depression
- Recover from Depression more quickly
- Have better immune/endocrine function
- Have lower mortality from cancer
- Have lower blood pressure
- Have less heart diseases
- Have less strokes
- Have overall lower mortality

Or in other words, they have better physical and mental health, better medical outcomes, and greater longevity.

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Therefore the importance to on one hand understand what is “positive intrinsic” religious spirituality, or the *Pi Faith Factor* as I like to call it, and on the other, how does one have or reach this type of spirituality in order to reap the health and healing benefits that these studies show.

Religions and spiritualities differ greatly from person to person, church to church, and even culture to culture. A person from Spain practicing the same basic religion as one in neighboring Portugal can have very distinct spiritualities and beliefs, and even more so when compared to someone from the United States. Cultural aspects, church tradition, and overall instruction by the priests and pastors,

family and society, linked with concrete experiences in one's life, influences the final outcome. All the aspects influence the faith factor, and whether it is a positive or negative factor, and if it is intrinsic or not. They all can influence the Pi Faith Factor.

The Religious Struggle

In studies of patients over several years, seven negative key elements were identified as leading to a religious struggle that resulted in a higher mortality rate independent of physical and mental health.

These key elements were identified as:

- God had abandoned them
- Punished by God for lack of devotion

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- Questioned what they had done for God to punish them
- Questioned God's love for them
- Feeling abandoned by their church
- Decided that the devil made it happen
- Questioned the power of God

Within the scope of my ministry, the same factors or elements showed up. All these elements clearly show a distorted or negative image of God, resulting from a partial or complete lack of knowledge of God and the Word of God. They all show the lack of an “experience” of God in their lives.

In almost ten years of ministry in Europe and the United States, I have come across dozens, if not hundreds, of cases of peoples

whose beliefs were rooted in these kinds of elements. Unprepared priests, pastors and pastoral counselors leave these people without valuable assistance and on their own. Without proper guidance, the person who is suffering can start down a path that only compounds their initially negative situation.

Un-doing this negativity and distorted view of God is a process that involves instruction, personal prayer and devotion, along with, in most cases, healing prayer, in order to allow for the person to “experience” God in their lives.

This is where someone like an enlightened priest, pastor, spiritual life coach or

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spiritual/pastoral counselor, preferably with someone gifted in healing prayer, can help considerably to turn things around and lead the person to a positive personal intrinsic spirituality: the Pi Faith Factor.

Some may tremble at the thought of an “experience” of God. The truly religious (and not spiritual!) may tell you that God is not supposed to be “experienced”, and that there is a danger in “experiencing” or seeking to “experience” God.

Unfortunately for Catholics, and some conservative Christians, this tends to be the norm. There is wariness when it comes to Charismatics or Pentecostals. However I must

point out all the teachings of Pope Paul II and more recently of Pope Benedict XVI, who during his general audience on September 16, 2009, when speaking about Symeon the new Theologian and his teachings addressed the necessity of experiencing God. In this both Symeon and Benedict XVI agree and insist on the fact that “...*the true knowledge of God does not come from books, but from spiritual experience – from life in the Spirit.*”

Pope Benedict develops even further this by stating “*If, in fact, we are concerned with good reason with tending to our physical, human and intellectual growth, it is even more important not to overlook our interior growth, which consists in knowing God – truly knowing him, not just from books, but interiorly and in*

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communion with him – so as to experience his help at all times and in all circumstances.”

This is “intrinsic spirituality”.

The word intrinsic is defined as *belonging to something as one of the basic and essential features that make it what it is.*¹

Therefore an “intrinsic” spirituality is a deep rooted and essential to life spirituality.

A spirituality that is a positive deep rooted and essential spirituality that makes up and influences the core being and life decisions of an individual, is what I call a **Pi Faith Factor**.

¹ MSN Encarta Dictionary

Now that it is defined, how do you get it?

I use tools that positively impact on your understanding of your relationship with God, what God's true nature is, and what his demands and promises really are, in order to turn a negative outlook into a positive outlook, and subsequently impact on the outcome. These tools can be healing prayer, scripture, books, teachings, music, conversations explaining the various tools and elements within them, and counseling that leads you to shift your view of God, religion and spirituality from a negative, and completely false perspective to the correct perspective which leads to life and healing.

The process can involve one or several sessions, homework and guided research, along

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with healing prayer, personal prayer and devotions, with the objective of correcting and overcoming the religious struggle.

I have found four steps are essential to reaching a Pi Faith Factor, and subsequently health and healing. The steps are major as they can prove to be life changing, as they lead you past barriers once considered impossible to cross. Just four steps, if done with conviction and truthfully, are enough to change your world:

Trust, Surrender, Believe & Receive.

Resources

Clinical Applications Workshop on Spirituality & Healthcare, Center for Spirituality, Theology & Health, Duke University Medical Center, August 2007.

Four Steps to Healing: Trust, Surrender, Believe & Receive, by Paul Pritchard, 2007

The Healing Power of Faith, How Belief and Prayer Can Help You Triumph Over Disease, by Harold G. Koenig, M.D., et. al.

The Faith Factor, by Dale A. Matthews M.D., et. al.

God, Faith and Health, Jeff Levine, Ph.D.

There are now so many published medical research studies in this area, the best way to identify specific areas/studies and publications would be to visit the sites of the identified research institutions.

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PAUL PRITCHARD is a Life Coach & Board Certified Pastoral Counselor with a healing ministry that has led him from Europe to America. Formally a lawyer and professor of international business law, he has earned a Master of Pastoral Counseling and Doctorate in Christian Counseling. He is a member of the American Association of Christian Counselors and The International Board of Professional & Pastoral Counselors, and the Christian Life Coaching Alliance.

Today Dr. Pritchard lives with his family in central Florida and is involved in writing, teaching, workshops, Life in the Spirit seminars, conferences, and healing prayer, as well as Spiritual Life Coaching & Counseling in an ecumenical healing ministry.

If you are interested in contacting or having Dr. Pritchard come to your area for conferences, seminars or workshops, log on to:

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