

## BECOMING WHOLE

Holistic health is a relatively new field of health practice. Not only do the practitioners stress physical health but also emotional well being. All of us should realize we cannot separate our lives into separate compartments because one part affects another. Unfortunately, many of the holistic health advocates are also advocates of Eastern religions and encourage such things as transcendental meditation and practicing yoga. This is an example of trying to accomplish something good using the wrong means. We humans are very complex beings. We do need to take care of the physical, mental (intellectual and emotional), and spiritual parts of our being. Most of us think the role of the church in our lives is primarily involved with our spiritual well-being; however, if we look to Jesus for direction, then we need to see the church also involved in physical and mental well being. Much of the ministry of Jesus concentrated on physical needs of people and He helped them develop the right emotional environment in which to function. We can see elements of this in the situation in which Jesus was involved during one of His visits to Jerusalem.

**JOHN 5:1** Most of the ministry of Jesus took place in the area around the Sea of Galilee. He would go up to Jerusalem for special festivals such as Passover and at other times when there were needs. The particular feast is not identified here; however, it was likely one of the three major feasts: Passover, Pentecost, or Tabernacles.

**JOHN 5:2-9** You can picture in your mind the scene there. This pool was apparently spring fed and many people in the area believed that there was healing power in the water at certain times. These times were associated with turbulent activity in the water. The people believe an angel was responsible for the movement of the water and the first person to get into the pool during such times would be healed of whatever infirmity he had. [Commentaries point out that the part of the angel disturbing the water is not in the more reliable ancient manuscripts and that the disturbance was likely caused by intermittent flow of the spring.] Whatever the explanation, people had been healed there based on what they believed. If there had not been some incidents of healing, then people would not have continued to come there. There are places even today where people go expecting to receive healing from infirmity. Lourdes in France and Guadalupe Hidalgo in Mexico are two of the better known shrines. Some are healed or experience improvement from their ailments. Usually, such healing is thought to be related to the person saying the right prayers or thinking the right thoughts or something that they must do. The infirm man Jesus encountered was thinking he had to do something for his healing to become a reality. But he was not able to help himself. This is the condition of the world that is lost in sin. There is no way for them to help themselves out of the condition in which they are in. Most of the time people think they must do something to bring about wholeness.

All of us would answer the question, "Will you be made whole?" in the affirmative. However, it would be a "Yes, but..." response. "I would be made whole, but I can't do this and I can't do that" is typically what we say. We are still operating from our own strength or (actually) our lack of strength. We need to be listening to Jesus who tells us to "rise up and walk." We experience wholeness at the point where we stop depending on our own selves and looking at the reason why we can't do something, but simply trust in the Word of God.

**JOHN 5:10-13** When we experience wholeness, some will try to tell us. "Hey, you can't do that, it violates the rules." For example, some who don't have a lot of material possessions think they can't be happy. Every now and then someone who has nothing materially is completely happy and everyone says, "You can't be happy, you are poor -- you are breaking the rules." Instead of looking

for the reason for such an unusual circumstance, we focus on the violation of that which we thought was “it had to be.”

The Jews were concentrating on one value system to the exclusion of everything else. The observance of the Sabbath was quite important to them and it is (actually) important to us though we often ignore it. It is a unique observance and in all the religions of the world only the Jewish religion practiced this observance. In the zeal to preserve this distinction, the leaders had gone beyond the point of reasonableness and their focus only on the minutia of the Sabbath laws blinded them to the fact that God cares about each one of us as individuals. Instead of rejoicing with the man over his being healed, they found fault in his failure to observe the ritualistic law. Since Jesus did not grandstand in the miracles He performed, the man who was healed did not know the name of the One responsible for healing him. The Jewish leaders wanted to know who had told the man to carry his bed on the Sabbath.

**JOHN 5:14-15** After the commotion had settled down, Jesus found the man and left him with some sound advice. In effect, Jesus told the man. "Now that you are well (in the physical), straighten out the rest of your life (spiritual and emotional) so that this part of your being doesn't become crippled also.

Every part of our life has need for wholeness, we cannot afford to neglect any part and have real health. Many times when we experience problems with our physical well being, we can prevent compounding the problems if we can maintain good spiritual and emotional health. If we fail to maintain the non-physical well being, then it is very difficult to re-establish physical well being once we do become ill.

We can look to Jesus to be the Provider of all our needs for body, soul and spirit. He is the complete Savior for all that we are.