

# Recovery

I had to go into hospital for a serious operation, and I was blessed with a good hospital experience. I was also conscious of God's guardian care of me the whole time, and after what felt like a death and resurrection experience (when I had the operation) I made a full recovery.

Thankfully the cause of the disease has been removed and in the words of the surgeon, when looking at my results, "They don't get better than that." I really do feel that I have been given a new life.

But it is not immortal life with eternal health. I still have the old body with its other failings and weaknesses to remind me of my mortality. And if I'm to make a really complete recovery there are various things that have to be done.

As I left hospital, I felt there was a whole new way of life to learn about. Just look at this list:

- ❖ Hospital medication to complete.
- ❖ Periodic blood tests.
- ❖ Calls to the doctor if things don't feel quite right.
- ❖ Calls from the district nurse to check the wound is healing.
- ❖ Visits to the hospital so the surgeon can check his handiwork.
- ❖ Specific exercises to do every day – almost certainly for the rest of my life.
- ❖ Regular general exercise.

My body has to relearn how to perform certain functions in an appropriate way, following the removal of a certain organ. Because of the loss of

that one part, the rest of the body has to do more work and become more efficient. Happily, the body is quite capable of making the changes and I am confident of a good outcome.

Without any exaggeration, the whole experience represents learning to live a new way of life. This is vital if I am going to really benefit from my recovery and be totally cured from the disease.

## Spiritual Medicine

This is all true of the new life we can have in Jesus Christ. First we have the diagnosis: we are all in need of the salvation that God has offered to us because we have the deadliest disease. The Bible calls it sin and every human being suffers from it. It is like a cancer that continually eats away at us and ultimately we will perish unless we undergo some radical treatment.



First, we have to prepare ourselves for the experience, just like going into hospital, and we need to consult the expert. Once again the Bible comes into play, telling us what has to be done and how we have to change our thinking and our lives. This is necessary so that God, just like a medical consultant, can operate on our lives to spiritually remove the disease and give us a fresh start – a new life. He does so with the support of His vitally important ‘staff’, the master physician, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We have to undergo a death and resurrection experience to start the new life. The Bible explains very clearly, in the words of Jesus, that we need to be baptised. It says this:

*He who believes and is baptized will be saved (Mark 16:16).*

Notice that word, ‘believes’. When we have to have surgery and enter a recovery programme it is absolutely vital that we believe in what the doctor tells us, especially about recovery.



We are going to place our complete confidence in the surgical team. With spiritual things it is just the same. We have to place our complete trust in God and the Lord Jesus; they are the only experts in dealing with our problem.

Being baptised is the believer’s way of showing that he has that faith in God. It is also our personal symbolic experience of death and resurrection. We are buried in water for a few moments, symbolising the end of the old way of life. Then we rise up and start our new life. It also associates us with the Lord Jesus in his death and resurrection.

*We were buried with him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of his death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of his resurrection (Romans 6:4–5).*

## **A New Life**

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new (2 Corinthians 5:17).*

So after baptism we begin a new life in Christ. But let’s remember that is just the start. Just as I had to follow instructions after the operation, there is a continuing need to follow a recovery programme. For me, there was a new regime of regular exercise, the support of friends and family and the continued interest of the medical staff.

In the new life in Christ these things include Bible reading, prayer and living in a spiritual family.

Daily Bible reading is a ‘must’, to learn about God’s character and to take in what He asks of us. A Bible reading plan is available through this magazine. It is important to be systematic and regular about this, just like my exercises. If you start to miss days, or

to exercise haphazardly, then the cure will not be effective and recovery will not be as good. The instruction book can never be thrown away! The same really applies to every aspect of the new life.

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).*

Prayer is your opportunity through the Lord Jesus to share your concerns with God about your recovery and spiritual development. If God speaks to us through His word, prayer is our opportunity to talk to Him, to consult Him (following the medical metaphor). The Apostle Paul advised his readers to:

*Pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17).*

Having been baptised, we become a son or daughter of God. We then have a spiritual family in those other believers, who have the same relationship, and so become our brothers and sisters in Christ. In fact the name 'Christadelphians' means 'brothers (and sisters) in Christ'. The support of this new family in Christ is very important.

## **Promise of Unfailing Health**

Where will all the exercises of this new life get you? Very far indeed! My surgery, as good as it was, will only prolong this life. One person with whom I shared this experience said that the doctor had told him it would prolong his life by about fifteen years.

As we said earlier it won't bring eternal life. It won't bring certain hope into our lives for a future free of illness.



But the spiritual operation we have been considering, and to which we all need to subject ourselves, leads to a better quality of life now; a literal resurrection experience when Jesus comes; and everlasting life and eternal health in his kingdom. It is full of hope. We can live in confident expectation that God, working through the Lord Jesus, will keep His word to us. The cure will finally be totally effective.

One of the Old Testament prophets gives us a glimpse of that life in these words:

*Those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint (Isaiah 40:31).*

Now that's the kind of recovery I'd really like!

**David Nightingale**