

**Lesson #13**  
**Teaching Outline**

**Healing of the Paralytic of 38 Years**

**John 5**

**Principle Truth:**

**The heart and soul of the gospel – the Christian faith – is a right view of the identity of Jesus Christ.**

**Teaching Outline:**

- I. The Case and the Cure: (5:1-15)**
  
- II. The Controversy and the Chasm: (5:16-18)**
  
- III. The Claims of Jesus: (5:19-49)**
  - A. Equal with God in  
Nature, Works, Power, and Authority**
  
  - B. Equal with God in  
Judgment and Raising the Dead**
  
  - C. Equal with God in  
Honor and Worship**

**Lesson #13**  
**Series 2 – Story 7**

**Healing of Paralytic of 38 Years**

John 5:1-18

***JESUS' MIRACULOUS HEALING AND FORGIVENESS REVEAL HIS  
EQUALITY WITH GOD.***

**Story Outline:**

- I. Cure of paralytic
- II. Conspiracy of Jewish Leaders
- III. Command to sin no more
- IV. Cooperation and partnership with God

**Principles for Life Application:**

- 1. A person cannot be helped unless he wants to be helped.
- 2. Jesus is the only help for the helpless and the only hope for the hopeless.
- 3. In our weakness, Jesus desires to be our strength.
- 4. Sometimes God will ask us to do the impossible or even allow sickness in order to reveal His glory.
- 5. Our eyes and our hearts must be continuously on Jesus in order to gain victory and blessing.
- 6. Strength comes when our will is aligned with God's will.
- 7. Healing is a partnership of divine sovereignty and human responsibility.
- 8. Prideful hearts are blind to the truth.
- 9. Legalism, ritual, and tradition must never take the place of a genuine relationship with Jesus.
- 10. God is more concerned about the attitude of the heart than the physical condition of the body.
- 11. True faith always produces action.
- 12. Sin in the heart can lead to sickness while purity of heart brings healing, vitality, and wholeness.
- 13. The only thing that lasts and gives significance and meaning in life is to be in partnership with what God is doing.
- 14. The only work of eternal value is God's work.

## NAME OF JESUS

### Devotional Reading

#### “JESUS THE GREAT PHYSICIAN”

In 2003, at the age of 38, I was diagnosed with a congenital heart defect that if left untreated, would not only be physically debilitating as I grew older, but also carried the risk of stroke and even of sudden death. Called an Atrial Septal Defect, I had a large hole between the upper chambers of my heart that caused the blood to flow abnormally, thus requiring the right side of my heart and my lungs to work harder in order to deliver oxygen rich blood throughout my body. Being a very active person and by all accounts a healthy one, I thought that surely this was a mistake. However, further testing confirmed the diagnosis with the recommendation of repairing the defect as soon as possible. As a wife and mother of two young children, fear for their future and anxiety over my own mortality literally rocked my world and sent me to my knees. Being a nurse with cardiac experience, I understood the risks of both leaving the defect alone and surgically repairing it. Thus, the logical medically trained side of me said “Yes! Let’s fix this thing as soon as possible so I can have a healthy heart that works efficiently in order to insure a long and a satisfying life,” however, the irrational fearful woman inside rebutted . . . *“What if I don’t make it through the surgery? What if I have a stroke before or during the operation, and I am incapacitated the rest of my life? Who will take care of my sweet girls and teach them all the important things of life? How will my husband be able to manage them and work? Why now, Lord? Why didn’t you close it at birth or reveal it shortly after?”* All to which I heard the Lord gently whisper: *“I know the plans I have for you . . . trust Me.”*

Interestingly, several years before I received this startling news, by God’s providence, I had become involved in a doctrinally sound, biblically based Bible study in my community. Having walked away from the Christian faith as a young adult, my hunger and thirst to know more of Jesus and to live in a manner pleasing to Him grew rapidly as I looked intently into His powerful and life changing Word. Convicted of my sin of falling away from Him and into the arms of the world, I recommitted my life to Jesus and prayed that He would deepen my love for Him, and increase my faith and dependence on Him. Little did I know at the time that He would soon answer that prayer through a great trial that would not only test my sincerity and devotion, but also grow my faith and trust in His promises exponentially.

Preparing me in advance for what He knew I was about to face with the news of my medical condition, I had just completed a year-long study of the book of John where I learned many truths about WHO Jesus is and WHY He came. In His amazing grace and perfect timing, Jesus had mercifully drawn me back to His word and revealed Himself to me so that I would have the foundation of faith that gave me the assurance of a trustworthy SAVIOR and a faithful FRIEND to help me in my time of need. Even more, He reminded me that I had **JESUS** the compassionate

and **GREAT PHYSICIAN**, the One who has the power to heal all sickness and disease, by my side.

Reflecting on what I had recently learned, I recalled that while on earth, Jesus Christ performed more physical healings than any other type of miracle. By His almighty power, He made the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the leper to be cleansed, the paralytic to walk, the mentally ill to be sane, and even the dead to come to life. I was encouraged as I realized there was no illness He could not heal and no person whom He would reject. Jesus also brought to my mind the wondrous truth found in Psalm 139: “*You formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. My frame was not hidden from You when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in Your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when yet there was none of them*” (Psalm 139:13, 15-16). Through these words, I was comforted knowing that He was not the least bit surprised or stumped by this defect. Because He saw me from the beginning and knew every one of my days before one came to pass, I had confident faith that He was able to knit the chambers of my heart together and to fully heal me. With great hope for my future, a peace that passes all understanding washed over me. Filled with relief and gratitude, I fell on my face before the Lord in worship and adoration for WHO He is, and in supplication for His help, I asked Him to be strong in me so that I could glorify Him in the midst of the trial.

*“Because he holds fast to Me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him because he knows My name. When he calls to Me, I will answer him; I will deliver him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him My salvation.”* (Psalm 91:14-16)

In the days that followed as I sought the Lord’s will, He made it clear that I must go through with the surgery. Reading my anxious thoughts, He once again said “*trust Me, I know the plans I have for you,*” but this time He added, “*give me your heart.*” Confused by these words, I said “*Lord, I have given you my heart, I have placed my life in Your hands and I am trusting you as the GREAT PHYSICIAN to heal me.*” To which He gently, yet firmly replied, “*I’m not asking for just your physical heart, dear one, I want your WHOLE heart, not just the ‘hole-y’ part. I don’t want to merely fix the abnormality in your heart muscle, I want to fix that God-shaped hole in your heart that is keeping you from having the full and abundant life for which you were created and for which I died. Until you do, you will never have a truly healthy heart that is vibrant with life and filled with unending peace and true happiness. As long as that God-shaped hole remains open in your heart, you will always be ‘sick,’ plagued with sin and unsatisfied. You will exhaust yourself running to and fro throughout the world, searching for healing for that hole that only I can give. And in the end, if you don’t let Me heal that gaping wound, you will reap the worst possible consequence . . . eternal separation from Me, condemned to live forever in the diseased place of darkness and sin where there is constant pain and sorrow.*” “*OH NO, Lord!*” I replied, “*that is a fate worse than death! Take my heart, my whole heart and my whole life and have Your way. More than anything, I want You to heal that God-shaped hole in my heart, even if it means, the physical hole remains open . . . even if it means I die and leave my girls and*

*husband behind. Because now, I understand that unless you do, there is a fate worse than death.” With eyes that now could “see” the truth, my prayers for healing changed. I no longer prayed only for the physical healing of my heart, but also for the spiritual renewal of it: “JESUS,” I prayed, “You are the **GREAT PHYSICIAN**. You know what is best and I trust you. In Your mercy, please heal my heart and make me clean. Give me a whole heart that fully loves you and an undivided heart that worships only you. Change my heart, O God, make it new! I want the regular beat and sound of my heart...the ‘lub-dub, lub-dub, lub-dub’ of this life, to instead beat passionately and fervently for You forever . . . ‘JE-SUS! JE-SUS! JE-SUS!’”*

As with my own sickness and healing, for each and every healing miracle that Jesus the **GREAT PHYSICIAN** performed while living on earth, there is always a deeper purpose and a greater work, that He wants to do. More than the physical healing of the body, which I believe He truly delights in doing, Jesus’s greatest desire is to heal the human heart and soul that is sick with sin and doomed to eternal suffering and death. When sin entered the world through Adam and Eve’s disobedience, hardship, toil, pain, suffering and broken fellowship with God were the consequences. Every human affliction from that moment on is now ultimately rooted in sin. And until that sin problem is addressed, no one will ever be truly healed and have the joy, hope, peace and blessed assurance of eternal abundant life. Until the sin-sick heart is restored through the forgiveness of sin received by faith in Jesus Christ, the **GREAT PHYSICIAN**, there is no real life, no matter how physically “well” you are. A medical doctor may be able to heal your body, but only Jesus Christ, the **GREAT PHYSICIAN** can heal your soul.

*“O Lord, restore me to health and make me live! Behold, it was for my welfare that I had bitterness; but in love You have delivered my life from the pit of destruction, for You have cast all my sins behind Your back.” (Isaiah 38:16-17)*

I know many of you today are suffering with all kinds of sickness and disease. But even more importantly, I know that Jesus knows, too. Be encouraged that Jesus fully understands your pain, your grief, your sorrow and your emotional angst because He Himself suffered greatly on earth. Isaiah, the prophet tells us He was “*a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces He was despised and we esteemed Him not. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His stripes we are healed*” (Isaiah 53:3-5). Unlike any human being on the earth, Jesus knows exactly how you feel and He alone holds the life-giving remedy. The CROSS. Jesus, the **GREAT PHYSICIAN** came to suffer and die in our place, so that we could be healed from sin and made whole. He came to exchange His righteousness for our sin that we may be restored to the fullness of life and eternal joy and peace with God forevermore. Although in this life you may not get the complete physical healing you desire, but through Jesus’s blood and righteousness you get something better...the healing of your heart and soul that leads to peace with God, acceptance of His will for you now and a perfect and whole life forevermore in His coming New and Glorious Kingdom.

Jesus Christ the **GREAT PHYSICIAN**, wants nothing more than to enter into Your life today. He wants to absorb all your afflictions and heal all your illnesses. When you approach Him in faith, He promises to draw near and help you in your time of need. However, it is vitally important to remember that His primary goal is not always your physical healing, but rather to make you spiritually whole. Jesus said, *“I came that they may have life and have it abundantly”* (John 10:10). Is there a *“hole”* in your heart today, keeping you from experiencing that abundant life, which needs the healing touch of the **JESUS** the **GREAT PHYSICIAN**? Does your heart need spiritual surgery to correct its rhythm and life song? Does it fervently, passionately beat for Christ, singing . . . *“JE-SUS, JE-SUS, JE-SUS”* or is the world disrupting its rhythm and determining its song?

What illness do you need to bring to **JESUS**, the **GREAT PHYSICIAN** today? Do you truly believe that He can heal you? Will you trust Him with your life in confident faith that the plans He has for you are far better than your own? Are you willing to give Him your whole heart that He might make you clean and fill you with all His many blessings? The benefits of the Lord’s healing are far better than anything this world can offer. In Him alone are found the gifts of His eternal love, His unending joy, His everlasting peace with God and the blessed hope that no matter what this life holds, there is a beautiful life ahead . . . a life without pain and suffering . . . a life where you will have a new and glorified body free of disease . . . a life without sorrow and grief . . . a life where you will live forever and ever in the presence of the King of all creation!

**“Though He slay me, I will hope in Him.” (Job 13:15)**

**“For I know my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will stand upon the earth.  
And after my skin is destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God,  
whom I shall see for myself and my eyes shall behold, and not another.  
My heart faints within me!”  
Job 19:25-26**

**“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.  
Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.  
Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.”  
Psalm 51:10-12**

**“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”  
Philippians 4:13**

# THE DOCTRINE

## “SABBATH”

### The Law of the Sabbath in the Old Testament

The term “**Sabbath**” comes from a Hebrew word meaning “*cease*” or “*desist*.” The **Sabbath** was a day (lasting from Friday evening until Saturday evening in Jesus’ time) when all ordinary work stopped. The scriptures relate that God gave his people the **Sabbath** as an opportunity to worship Him and serve others and as a reminder of two great truths found in the revelation of the Bible – Creation and Redemption.

The relationship between the first great truth, Creation and the **Sabbath**, is first expressed in Genesis 2:2-3 where we are told that God “*ceased*” his work after six days and then “*blessed*” the seventh day and declared it “*holy*.” Therefore, the **Sabbath** from earliest times, was given by God to those He created in order to reinforce the fundamental pattern, He, the Creator, set for them. One days’ rest in seven is a necessity for individuals, families, households, and even animals (Exodus 20:10). The **Sabbath’s** setting in the biblical account of Creation indicates that it is one of those Old Testament standards meant not only for Israel alone but for all people. The Decalogue (10 Commandments) occupied a very special place in Old Testament law. Out of all God’s instructions, this **Sabbath** law was spoken by God’s audible voice (Exodus 20:1), written by his finger (31:18), and placed in the tabernacle ark – the place that was the center and the heart of Israel’s worship (25:16). Whether or not Sunday is recognized as the Christian **Sabbath**, one is obliged to accept this central principle of biblical teaching as far as the **Sabbath** is concerned. In other words, God’s instruction wisely requires people to observe a regular weekly break from their work.

As to the second great truth of the Bible’s **Sabbath** teaching, that of Redemption, the **Sabbath** law reappears in Deuteronomy 5:12-15, but here a different reason other than Creation, is attached to its observance: “*Remember that you were once slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out with amazing power and mighty deeds. That is why the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the **Sabbath** day*” (v.15). Therefore, the first stream of **Sabbath** law is addressed through Israel to all people as created beings made in the image of God, while the second is directed specifically TO Israel as God’s redeemed people. So the **Sabbath** is God’s signpost, pointing not only to His goodness toward all people as their Creator but also to His mercy toward his chosen people as their Redeemer. There is also one other significant point in Deuteronomy’s version of the **Sabbath**. The prohibition of all work on the **Sabbath** day is followed by an explanatory note – “*On that day no one in your household may do any kind of work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your oxen and donkeys and other livestock and any foreigners living among you. All your male and female servants must rest as you do*” (Deuteronomy 5:14). This is a beautiful picture of

practical concern for others which is a feature of all Old Testament covenant teaching. Thus God's loving concern for Israel in her Egyptian slavery must be matched by the Israelite family's loving mercy and concern for others. Jesus was especially attentive to focus upon this compassionate side of **Sabbath** observance. He continually sought to rescue the **Sabbath** from the mass of callous regulations that threatened to suffocate it in his day (Mark 3:1-5). Christ's compassion therefore, is particularly noticeable as it was often displayed on the **Sabbath** throughout the gospels.

One very interesting additional note: The Old Testament's provision for a "*sabbatical year*" and the regulations stated in the Mosaic Law for the "*year of Jubilee*" (Leviticus 25:8-55) are both pictures of the compassionate, humanitarian theme encased in the doctrine of Sabbath. Every seventh year the land was to lie fallow and remain uncultivated. It needed a regular rest just as much as the people who sustained it. Additionally, during the sabbatical year, all debts were canceled within God's redeemed community, and for those who were tight-fisted and considered disobeying this law of debt canceling, the perpetrator would be considered guilty of sin with due punishment. God's people were to give freely without complaining, and the Lord God promised to bless them in everything they attempted to accomplish.

Observing the sabbatical year was obviously a great test of the people's obedience to God and of their willingness to depend upon Him for their livelihood. Sometimes the temptation to turn a blind eye to this **Sabbath** law was just too strong, but history testifies to Israel's courage in observing the letter of this law, despite threats of invasion and famine. Both Alexander the Great and the Romans excused Jews from paying taxes every seventh year in recognition of the depth of their religious convictions. The Old Testament law codes went to considerable lengths to strengthen the **Sabbath** ban on work by defining what may and may not be done by God's people on the **Sabbath** day. Their aim was to stop regular everyday work, because if God had set aside the **Sabbath**, the most obvious way of profaning it was to treat it just like any other day. Rules were spelled out in specific terms that the farmer, the salesman, and even the housewife would understand. Obedience to the **Sabbath** law therefore was seen as the primary test of the people's allegiance to God. It was made quite clear that willful disobedience was a capital offense (Ex. 35:2), and the fate of the person found gathering wood in defiance of **Sabbath** regulations showed that this was no idle threat. The **Sabbath** was intended to be a blessing, not a burden. Above all else, it was a weekly sign to the Jewish people and to the world that God loved his people and wanted to draw them into an ever-closer relationship with himself. Those who valued that relationship enjoyed the **Sabbath** and called it a delight (Isaiah 58:13-14). Psalm 92 is an example of the sheer joy of **Sabbath** day worship and is entitled, "*A Song for the Sabbath.*"

## **The Warning from God's Prophets Regarding Sabbath Observance**

The later prophets in particular were far from blind to the dark side of human nature. They knew that a great deal of **Sabbath** observance had become a sham. Many treated the **Sabbath** more as a holiday than as a holy day. It became an opportunity for self-indulgence rather than delighting in God. Those who went through the motions of **Sabbath** worship with unrepentant hearts nauseated the Lord, said the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 1:10-15). The prophet Jeremiah as well announced that Jerusalem's **Sabbath** breaking would surely bring destruction upon the city (Jeremiah 17:27). Ezekiel also warned of the neglect of **Sabbath** observance announcing the certainty of God's wrath for such an offense (Ezekiel 20:12-24). When the ax of God's judgment finally fell through the exile of the Southern Kingdom to Babylon in 586 BC, the surviving remnant of the nation took the lesson of **Sabbath** breaking to heart. **Sabbath** keeping thus became one of the few distinctive marks of faithful Jews who retained the practice while living in a foreign land. Therefore, it assumed an extra significance. Under the leadership of men like Nehemiah and Ezra, the returning Jewish exiles were far more careful than their predecessors in observing the **Sabbath** day (Nehemiah 10:31; 13: 15-22).

## **The Ministry of Jesus and the Law of the Sabbath**

Prior to the first century, Jews in Palestine developed a meticulous set of rules for preserving and promoting the observance of the **Sabbath**. In the Jewish Mishnah much attention is devoted exclusively to **Sabbath** rules and regulations. Their main purpose was to clearly define "work" in an attempt to show every Israelite what is and is not permitted on the **Sabbath**. Unfortunately, this led to such hairsplitting that ecclesiastical lawyers often differed among themselves in their questionable interpretations. The inevitable resulted as the main purpose of the **Sabbath** became lost entirely beneath a mass of legalistic details. The rabbis themselves recognized the extent to which they were adding to the straightforward teaching of the Old Testament. As one of them put it, "*the rules about the Sabbath are as mountains hanging by a hair, for Scripture is scanty and rules many.*"

Throughout the gospels, Jesus had multiple confrontations with these legalistic Jewish religious leaders over **Sabbath** observances. From their perspective Jesus was a **Sabbath** breaker, and therefore a lawbreaker. Jesus however never saw himself as a **Sabbath** breaker. He came not to abolish the law, but to fulfill the law. He went to synagogue regularly on the **Sabbath** day. He read the lesson, preached and taught. He clearly accepted the principle that the **Sabbath** was an appropriate day for the worship of God. His collision with the Pharisees was the point at which their tradition departed from His pure biblical teaching. Their traditions essentially became an end in itself.

Rabbinic teaching and tradition regarding the **Sabbath** became unbalanced exalting the institution above the people it was intended to serve. By making it an end in itself, the Pharisees effectively robbed the **Sabbath** of one of its main purposes – showing mercy and compassion to the needy. More than anything else Jesus’ compassionate **Sabbath** day healings put him on a collision course with the law of rabbinic restrictions. The Old Testament does not forbid cures on the **Sabbath** day, but the rabbis labeled all healing as “*work*,” which logically was to be avoided on the **Sabbath**, unless life was at risk. Jesus fearlessly exposed the absurd inconsistencies to which this attitude had led. How, he asked, could it be right to circumcise a baby or lead an animal to water on the **Sabbath** day (which tradition allowed) but wrong to heal a chronically handicapped woman and a crippled man, even if their lives were not in immediate danger? The **Sabbath**, Jesus taught, was a particularly appropriate day for acts of mercy as this is a form of redemption through compassion – redemption being one of the two great truths observance of the **Sabbath** represents.

Astoundingly Jesus, the God - man from heaven, claimed that He was the Lord of the **Sabbath** (Mark 2:28; Matthew 12:5-8). Just as God kept working, despite his Creation rest, to sustain the world in mercy, so Jesus would continue to teach and to heal on the **Sabbath** day (John 5:17) bringing redemption to all men. But one day his redemptive work would be complete, and then the **Sabbath’s** purpose (as a sign of redemption) would be accomplished. It is interesting that the apostle Paul in his letter to the Colossian believers considered the **Sabbath** to be a shadow, while Christ himself, is the reality of that shadow (Colossians 2:17).

The more we know, love, and serve our Lord Jesus through serving others, the more we will desire to worship Him in spirit and in truth – understanding the beautiful balance between observing the law of God, without sacrificing the heart of God. One of the keys to effective service is found in 2 Corinthians 3:17-18: “*Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*” It is the desire of the Spirit of God that we behold Jesus, that we be taken up with Him, that we worship and honor Him; and as we worship Him, what happens? The Spirit of God makes us like the One we worship – the One who taught us not only to love God with all our heart, but to love our neighbor as ourselves.

One of the most esteemed missions of service and ministry in India is Dohnavur, located in South India. The founder of this mission was Amy Carmichael, a woman admired by all who knew her for her determination to always seek God’s “*pattern on the mount*” for anything and everything that took place at that mission. The story is told that when a large chapel was needed, after much prayer, she determined that it would be placed in the very center of the mission compound. Quite unusually, it was to have two spires. One spire, yes, but two spires, why? The Lord had a reason for this and led Amy to see His intension for the two spires. The spire at the front of the chapel was to represent worship – the purity of worship. The spire at the rear was to represent service. Whenever those spires were seen during the day, all were reminded that

**worship must precede service.** Service flows out of worship - a beautiful image of what the doctrine of God's **Sabbath** means. Amy Carmichael herself labored for 40 years without a furlough. There is little wonder that God significantly blessed the literature that came from Dohnavur along with an abundant harvest of fruit from the life of one who genuinely understood the balance between **worship** of God (**Sabbath**) and the **work** of God (ministry and healing).

The battle of the Christian life is to bring your own heart into alignment and balance with Christ's, that is, getting up each morning and replacing your natural "*orphan*" mind-set with a mind-set of your full and free adoption into the very family of God through the finished work of Jesus, who loves us and gave His very life for us out of the overflowing fullness of his gracious heart. We must never forget that we are made right with God based on what Christ has done, rather than on what we do. To "*help*" the gospel, therefore is to lose the gospel. How easily we slip out of this balance. Paul's question in Galatians 3:3 on this subject is telling, "*Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?*" The central message of Galatians is that the freedom of God's grace and love is not only the gateway but also the pathway of the Christian life. May we understand afresh the life-giving power of the balance between the worship of God and the work of God. The foundational truth of the doctrine of the **Sabbath** was intended by God to show us.

## Questions for Reflection

*Read John 5:1-9*

1. Where did this first public miracle of Jesus take place? The Aramaic word Bethesda is translated “House of Mercy” or “House of Grace”. What insight does this give you into Who Jesus is and Why He came?
2. How many years had the paralyzed man been ill? What effect might the length of time of suffering have had on an individual? Based on the text, what other kinds of “sickness” might this man be suffering from?
3. What does the fact that Jesus “knew” all about this man teach you about Jesus? Does this aspect of Christ’s character delight or frighten you? Why?
4. What challenging question did Jesus ask the paralyzed man in v.6? What do you think He was trying to awaken in this man?
5. What does the man’s answer suggest that He and the others who gathered around the pool were putting their hope for healing in? Where do you turn first and in what do you most often place your hope when you are sick or suffering?

6. Preoccupied with their own disabilities and inabilities, the invalids around the pool failed to see the One who had the power to heal them completely and forever. What barriers in your own life are hindering you from seeing Jesus and receiving His mercy and healing?
  
7. What command did Jesus give the paralytic? How did the man respond? What lessons about faith do you learn from this encounter?
  
8. Has Jesus ever confronted you in His word and convicted you of the need to do something in order to be released from a circumstance or to overcome a debilitating illness? How did you choose to respond? What were the results?

*Read John 5:9-15*

9. What did the man do after he was healed? Where did he go? Why do you think he went there?
  
10. On what day of the week did this miracle happen? Why was that a problem for the Jewish leaders? (see Exodus 20:10, Nehemiah 13: 15-19, Jeremiah 17:21-22) What lesson do you think Jesus was trying to teach these leaders?
  
11. Why do you think some people prefer to follow religious rules and rituals over compassion and relationships? How does this impact the church? Your witness? Your personal growth and maturity in Christ?

12. Have you ever been so caught up in your religion that you totally missed Jesus? How did you become aware of your spiritual illness?

13. What did Jesus say to the man when he found him in the temple? Why do you think Jesus said this? What correlation does sin have with sickness?

*Read John v. 16-18*

14. The Jews sought to kill Jesus for 2 things. What were they? How did Jesus respond to them? What does this teach you about Who Jesus is and Why He came?

15. What do you learn from this passage regarding the kind of work Jesus approves of on the Sabbath? Why? (see Matthew 12:1-14 for help)

## **JESUS THE GREAT PHYSICIAN**

What illness or affliction do you need to bring to Jesus for healing? How has this devotion helped you better understand Who Jesus is and Why He came?

## **SALVATION CHALLENGE**

Have you ever truly recognized Jesus for Who He is and received His saving mercy? Have you asked Him to forgive you of all your sins and heal you that you might walk freely in the newness of life that only He can give?