



From the Manger to the Cross, the Men in Christ's Life: The Man at the Healing Pool

by Kris Swiatocho

Editors note: This is a part of a series.

*My stepfather is only one example of a man who has impacted my life as a result of his relationship with Christ. Throughout this series, I want to share with you about some of the other men who have impacted my life solely because of their relationship with Jesus. I believe as I share that you, too, will connect with them and discover for yourself how God has always had a plan for you, is working it out in your life and will never leave you.*

What is it going to take? How much am I going to endure? How many times will God allow me to fail? How many times will I allow myself to fail?

I am an independent, self-motivated overachiever. I have been this way since I can remember. My mother said that before I was three years old I was dressing myself, making my own breakfast (toast with cinnamon and butter, mmmm) and taking walks to visit neighbors during my first real snow fall. My mom woke up one morning and freaked out because the front door was wide open, and I was nowhere to be found. Then she looked outside and saw tiny boot prints leading to Mrs. Dutton's home across the dirt road. She just sighed with relief knowing that I had not been stolen by gypsies. So I guess I have always known what I wanted, where I was going and what it would take to get there.

By the time I was eight I had my first paying job. My parents didn't believe in receiving an allowance. They told me if I wanted extra money I would have to work for it. I had always wanted a lemonade stand. Perhaps I could be like Lucy from Charlie Brown and make some extra money by giving out advice. "No," my mother said. Somebody could choke and sue us. I thought, what? She told me I would have to find something else. I noticed all these little boys around town were selling the local paper. I thought, I can do that!

So after school one day I went down to the newspaper company, walked in the door with my head held high and asked how I could also have my own paper route. The lady at the counter looked at me and sort of giggled and smirked at the same time. "Sweetie, selling papers is for boys. It's a dirty job. Now run along and play." I asked her again: "Ma'am, I want to sell newspapers." Then she became a little stern and said, "Young lady, girls do not sell newspapers." I then said that was discrimination. Yes, I had just learned that word in Mrs. Wallace's third grade class. I was a little ahead of my classmates. Also, the fact that I had been reading Reader's Digest since I was 6 didn't hurt. The woman looked at me and said, "What?" I said, "It's discrimination, and I am going to bring my mom down here." I quickly ran home and told my mother who proceeded to drive me back to the newspaper. To say the least, I was selling newspapers that afternoon. I would continue for the next four years until I was old enough to babysit which would then lead to my first "real job" selling fried chicken—but that's another story.

As I look back in my past I see a pattern of who I was at such a young age. A girl determined, strong willed, assertive, confident and motivated . . . an overachiever. Then why, why do I still struggle with so many things in my life?

I have read many times the story of the man who laid by the Sheep Gate pool. Year after year, 38 to be exact, praying and hoping he would be next in the pool. He could almost feel the water. Water that would take away his pain. Water that would warm his body. Water that would cleanse him and restore him. He would get so close and yet, never reach the goal. I used to think, You dummy, get your parents to help you into the pool. What about your friends, where are they? While you are laying there haven't you met anybody else who might help you? Why not get close enough so it is only a foot away when it's time?

Sure, I have all the answers. Well, if I have all the answers then why in my own life have I not gotten it? Why are there areas of my life that may appear so clear to the solution but for some reason I never quite make it to the pool? I can see



the pool, smell it and almost taste it but each time I move toward it, I fail. Me, Ms. Motivated, strong willed, confident, super-duper overachiever. Should I know how to fix everything? At least I am good at telling everyone else how.

Like the man at the healing pool, I began to see some similarities in his life and mine. Lord, do I really want to be healed? Lord, is some of my pain and are my problems self-induced? I mean, if I have the skills and knowledge then why don't I change? Why don't I reach the pool? Jesus asked this man if he wanted to be healed. I was like, Jesus, that is a dumb question. Of course he wants to be healed. Look at what he is living in. Look at what is around him. Why would he want to stay there? Yeah, but why would I want to stay where I am? Why would you?

I believe some of our pain keeps us close to Jesus while other pain separates us. I know a lot of my pain separates me from my Savior. Pain that I haven't fully dealt with. Pain that I am hiding from others. Pain that if revealed will embarrass me. Pain that if revealed may actually heal me. Then what? I mean, just like the man by the pool, this life was all he knew. I mean, if he could actually walk, work and take care of himself, what would this mean?

Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a feast of the Jews. Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?" "Sir," the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me. Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, and so the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat." But he replied, "The man who made me well said to me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.' " So they asked him, "Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?" The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there. Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you." The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

-John 5: 1-15

What I Have Learned from the Man by the Healing Pool:

1. Our healing and restoration is personal.

Are there people all around us who need Jesus? Are there people who are sick, hurting, alone, discouraged, poor? Yes, then why doesn't he just fix us all at one time? Because it's about a personal relationship with each of us. A relationship that glorifies Jesus, not ourselves.

Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed.

-John 5:3

2. He made an effort.

This man made an effort to get healed. I think so many times we just give up. We don't believe God can really do anything. This man was there, day after day, waiting and hoping he could get into the pool. He didn't give up. I believe even though God has given us the direction and the solution, we might miss it or our past may stand in the way. We have a hard time giving it over to God. Don't give up. Keep trying.

One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years.

—John 5:5

3. We can give God our excuses. He has heard them all and still provides despite them.



What an amazing God we have! Jesus asked him, "Do you want to be healed?" and instead of saying, "Yes, sure, right now, let's go for it!" he gives an excuse. God asks us all the time by offering us solutions to our issues and problems. Instead of saying, "Sure, thanks God, I will do it," instead we give God excuses. How many more times does God have to give you a way out of a situation, show you a new door, put people in your path to give you advice and yet instead of seeing this as help, you give more excuses. What is it going to take?

Sir," the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.

—John 5:7

Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.

—Proverbs 15:22

4. God, if he wants to, can heal and restore us instantly.

Do you ever feel like he isn't going to heal you? Help you get out of debt, find a mate, land you that big job? God, in an instant, can change our lives. It's not a faith issue for we know what he can do. It's an obedience issue to wait for when he does. And if he doesn't, we are to serve and love him just the same.

At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

—John 5:9

5. God wants to help us before it's too late.

This man had been lying there for 38 years. So let's say he started at 10? 15? He is not an old man but middle-age. Some of you reading this are thinking you have all the time in the world to do some things. Oh, I can lose weight anytime, quit smoking, stop spending money I don't have or find a mate. Oh Kris, right now I am focused on my kids, my spouse and I will have plenty of time for each other later. Oh, I can get more involved with my church later. Work has to be first. . . . gotta pay the bills you know.

Do me a favor: don't wait. Life is but a fleeting moment. It can be gone in second. You are missing out on life; I know because I was there a year ago myself. Last year I became sick with vertigo three times. The third time I was in the hospital for a few days. It then took another two months to recover. During that time, I took a good look at my life and decided I need some changes. I joined Weight Watchers and lost 30lbs. You would think that 30lbs isn't much, but it changed so many things about my life. Am I Barbie again? Not likely, but I have started to do things I haven't done in years. Things like swimming, walking, hiking and roller skating. I can finally join so many of my friends. Do I still have a long way to go . . . yes, but I have started to move toward the pool and nothing is going to stop me. Yes, I may slow down here and there but I will not stop . . . I will get there.

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

—Philippians 3:12-14

Man is like a breath; his days are like a fleeting shadow.

—Psalms 144:4

6. God heals.

It is obvious from this scripture that God heals. He not only heals, but he restores us even better than before. He told this man to get up and take his mat and walk. God not only healed this man, but he gave him a purpose, a direction. God



doesn't heal us just for us to be healed. Our healing always has a part in his purpose for our lives.

"The man who made me well said to me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'  
—John 5:11

7. If we don't change, worse things can happen as a result of our sin.

"God, what do you mean? What worse things?" I mean, the man was about as bad as you can get, but God said he could be worse. This man knows he is healed but somehow, got caught in a sin to the point that God said to stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.

I know some of you are thinking that what you went through can't get any worse. Or that your sin is somewhat under control. Perhaps you haven't gained weight or you haven't yelled at your kid in a week or you only bought one pair of shoes vs. two this time or you deserve to have a little fun . . . one drink won't hurt. God healed you, he restored you, yet, you are falling right back into the patterns again. And this time, the weight might kill you (or at least rob you of your life). This time your yelling might damage your relationship with your kid to the point that they don't forgive you anymore. This time you overdraw on your credit card and they take it away, resulting in a poor credit rating. This time the one drink leads to a car accident that kills someone.

God healed this man. God can heal us, but we must want to be healed. And when we are healed, we must not fall back into the place that got us there.

Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you."  
—John 5:14

8. Jesus expects us to use our lives to reach others.

God doesn't do anything in our lives just because. There is always a purpose. In this man's life he expected him to tell others what he did. Not only tell others but to do it with confidence. For some it's hard to tell others what Christ has done for you. Christ doesn't give you an option; he expects us to share with others. But you know what is great about this passage? When the man first got healed, he didn't know it was Jesus. This gave him time to share without fear about Jesus. Then after he had been sharing for some time, Jesus revealed himself to the man. By this time, the man was ready to tell others. Sometimes when God heals us, changes us, restores us, it takes a little time to tell everyone. Just keep praying for the confidence. God never meant for you to hide who he is in your life.

The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.  
—John 5:15

Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails.  
—Proverbs 19:21

Recently God has spoken to me about certain areas of my life. He told me I needed to plan for success and not failure. Putting things in my life that give me success whether it's green veggies cut up in the fridge to bringing my own lunch to save on money, to friends who grab me and whisper "chill" as they see my blood pressure raise due to stress, or having pictures of my nieces and nephews around me to make me smile when I don't always want to smile to spending time in the Word every day so that it is sown in my heart to reveal itself during the most critical times in my life.

Plan for success and not failure. What do you need to change in your life? Can you see the pool, the healing water? You don't have to just look at it anymore. Give it to God, and you will be there. Get ready. He's just about to pass by you. Can you hear His steps?

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TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries helps churches, pastors and single adult leaders evaluate, develop and support their single adult ministries through high-energy speaking engagements, results-oriented consulting and training and leadership development conferences and seminars. Click here to request a FREE "How to Start a Single Adult Ministry" guide.

FromHisHands.com Ministries is Kris's speaking ministry. If you've ever heard her speak, you know that Kris is the kind of speaker who keeps the crowd captivated, shares great information and motivates people to make a difference in the lives of those around them! She speaks to all church audiences on everything from "first impression" ministry to women's topics to singles and young adults. She can speak on a Sunday morning, at a woman's retreat or for a single adults conference. Bring Kris to your church today!

**Singles and Relationships by Kris Swiatocho and Dick Purnell**

Many singles are Christians who wonder if God will ever bring a mate their way or if they should just stop focusing on a future with a marriage partner and live the single life to the fullest. Kris Swiatocho and Dick Purnell offer solid biblical answers for singles in this newest title in Dick's popular 31-Day Experiment Bible study.