

## R.S.V.P.

by  
**Steve Trullinger**

Have you ever ignored an invitation extended by a friend or family member, only to find out later that you missed a wonderful event that could have been a blessing to you? Perhaps you thought it would be boring, or that it wasn't focused on you, or that your time was better spent elsewhere. But if you had just responded to the invitation and showed up, you could have had a major enhancement of your life! Perhaps you might have met your future spouse, or made a key acquaintance for your business, or been encouraged by a timely word from a friend -- the possibilities are too many to imagine!

One invitation we can't afford to pass up is to accept the Father's offer of salvation through his one and only Son, the sacrificial Lamb:

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."* [John 3:16]

The consequences of ignoring this invitation are devastating and eternal, as Jesus emphasized in the Parable of the Wedding Feast [Mt. 22:1-13]! Without doubt, this is the most important invitation that we can ever have extended to us!

But assuming that we have accepted this most important invitation, are there others that God extends to us that we should be careful not to ignore? Of course! For example, Jesus invites us to take his yoke and find rest for our souls:

*"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."* [Mt. 11:28-30]

Another example is the Lord's invitation to stay close to him, like a branch attached to the vine:

*"I am the vine and you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."* [John 15: 5]

*If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you."* [John 15:7]

Just accepting these two invitations would go far in helping us receive "life abundantly" [John 10:10].

## **An Offer You Shouldn't Refuse!**

There are many invitations extended to us by the Lord, but those flowing from his desire to *heal* us are often the most overlooked or ignored. He is continually extending such invitations to those of us who are sick (in body, soul, or spirit), but several obstacles can get in the way and we end up missing God's best for us. One of the biggest obstacles is the failure to realize that God has extended a *standing invitation* for us *to receive* the healing that he not only desires for us but for which the price has *already* been paid, as prophesied by Isaiah:

*But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.*

[Is. 53: 5]

The apostle Peter reminds us that this is an *accomplished* work of the Lord:

*He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*

(emphasis added) [1 Pet. 2: 24]

If only we would take the Father at his Word and appropriate the healing that has already been purposed *and* purchased, but our lack of belief in this aspect of the will of our Father necessitates his reminders to us that his invitation still stands. Sometimes these promptings are quite dramatic, sometimes very subtle, as the examples below will illustrate.

## **Running Like a Gazelle!**

Near the end of an all-church prayer meeting a few years ago, one of the ladies in leadership delivered a word from the Lord that he wanted to heal someone with a short leg, someone else with a short arm, and to deliver someone else from a spirit of harlotry. The pastor in charge invited anyone fitting those descriptions to visit the prayer room where some of The Father's Touch team members and elders would be happy to pray for them.

Because of embarrassment, I suppose, no one showed up to the prayer room for deliverance from harlotry! Nor did anyone come for prayer who had a short arm. But the lady who did show up at the entrance to the prayer room was visibly shaking under the power of the Holy Spirit and said she was the one with a short leg. She was responding to the Lord's call to receive her healing! What happened next was a powerful demonstration of God's love and compassion!

She sat down and the prayer team gathered around her. One of the team members held the ankle of her short leg in his hand as they began to pray. Suddenly the lady began to shake as the power of God moved upon her and her leg pushed outward against the team member's hand holding her ankle! And she exclaimed that the pain all along one side of her body (due to being lopsided) was gone! Knowing she was healed, the tears began to flow as we began to praise God! But before she stood up out of the chair, the Lord had a word for her that she would soon be "running like a gazelle."

When she did stand up, she almost fell over because she wasn't used to having both legs the same length! After gaining her balance she was able to rejoin the congregation and give her praise report to the glory of God!

A few months later she called to tell the team that she had been jogging for a few weeks and now felt like she could “run forever -- like a gazelle!” Praise God!

What if she hadn't responded to her Father's invitation?

### **Sometimes, It Pays to Bring the Kids!**

One night a mother of four showed up to a home meeting of The Father's Touch ministry in the hope that her back would be healed. She apologized for bringing her four kids as she hadn't been able to get a sitter for them. What she didn't realize is that God had invited them too!

While the youngest of the brood had a happy time bouncing on the host's bed in the other room, one of the teams prayed for the mother's back and God healed it instantly! That would have been quite enough to bring her joy all by itself, but her love for her children and her now increased belief in the Father's desire to heal prompted her to ask if the team would mind praying for her oldest three children who all suffered from asthma. [Some of the team were undoubtedly desiring to pray for the little one bouncing on the bed to suddenly want a nap!]

The team obliged and started with the oldest son, who was about 11 or 12 years old. As the Holy Spirit came upon him and his body quivered as the healing took place, the second son (about 8 or 9) was getting nervous about what was happening to his brother! It was his turn next for prayer, and his mom had to calm him down a bit before the team could start to pray.

As the prayer began, one of the team saw in the spirit that one of the boy's lungs was smaller than the other and so they prayed for it to grow to match the larger one. The boy could feel something going on inside his chest and was really excited now, as his lung grew right then! The Lord also had a word for him that he “would have endurance far beyond that of his peers, able to run further and swim further, and that he would become a star athlete.”

After the Lord healed their little sister as well, mom was delighted at the Lord's abundant blessing on the whole family and no longer apologized for bringing the kids (except for the little bouncy “caboose”)!

About 4 years later we heard from this mother that her oldest boys were both very active athletically, and involved in the Junior Lifeguards! The oldest boy was leading worship in their mid-week fellowship group and the second son was a star athlete with great endurance, just as God had said he would be! Our Father is sovereign over backs, lungs, and asthma, and wants to bless beyond our imagination:

*Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. [Eph. 3:20]*

## With a Little Help From Your Friends!

Sometimes we don't even know that we are responding to an invitation! A friend may have nudged us to attend a meeting and we are not really sure why we said, "Yes! I'll go!" This is just what happened to a gentleman who was brought by a friend to a recent conference sponsored by The Father's Touch.

During the worship service, he was initially rather uncomfortable with the expressiveness of the people, as he was used to a more conservative, contemplative style in his home church. Nevertheless, he warmed up and about two thirds of the way through the service, he felt a warmth penetrate his right leg, which had had all the nerves severed during surgery 16 years before to remove a tumor. He had not been able to extend that leg or had any feeling in it for all those years, but God healed him that night and he now has restored use of the leg and the feeling is returning!

Although he had not come for healing, and no one was praying specifically for healing during that service, the invitation offered by God was still in force! This blessed man cooperated with his friend's recognition of the invitation and God acted!

### "Read My Lips!"

As many examples like those above illustrate, God is faithful to remind us of his invitation to the banqueting table of healing even when discouragement and unbelief have resulted in our resignation to our "fate" of living in a substandard condition of health and well-being! Beloved, God's will regarding healing is made very clear in his Word! Let's "read his lips" and believe! Never give up asking! After telling his disciples the Parable of the Persistent Widow, Jesus asked,

*"And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off?"* [Lk. 18: 7]

Here is an acronym that may help to respond to the Lord's invitation, an R.S.V.P., if you will:

**R**ecognize the reminder of your invitation,

**S**ee the possibility of receiving your healing, be

**V**ictorious over any hindrances, and

**P**ossess your healing, not letting it be stolen.

By expectantly responding to the Lord's invitation and believing in his overwhelming love and desire to make you whole, you will surely bring him glory and encourage those around you! It's another way that you, as the apple of his eye, can bless your Father in heaven!

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