

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT PUBLIC HEALTH?

1 God's Word about Cleansing and Purification through African Eyes

“When Ebola struck in West Africa, thousands of people were infected because of human-to-human contact. Concerned governments quarantined people and areas of infection to decrease chances of spreading the virus. Normally it took twenty-one days for a person to come out of quarantine.

Though many people died of the infection, others survived. Health officers examined and re-examined each survivor before releasing him or her into the community. The survivor was given a certificate of fitness that enabled the person to re-integrate into society if no traces of the disease was found. This was normally followed by great joy and dancing. Before the person returned home, however, the home was often sanitized and any old clothing was burned. This ensured that the home was free of the virus.

Infectious diseases are bad, which is why people take so much care to ensure that they do not spread.

The priests in Israel also functioned as the health officers. In cases of a contagious skin disease (traditionally translated “leprosy”), the priest performed elaborate checks and ceremonies before declaring the individual fit to go back into society. This ensured that the survivor was not discriminated against and restored to the full rights of the community.

This principle of seeing a health practitioner and obeying their instructions is very critical to controlling infectious diseases. People recovering from such sicknesses should not see these procedures as a waste of time, a violation of their rights, or a humiliating experience.

The cleanliness rules in the Bible show that God cares about his children's physical health. Christians should willingly comply with medical recommendations during a public health crisis. Whatever ailment you have, it is good to seek medical attention and follow the instructions given to promote healing.

” - African Touch Point
from Leviticus 14 of the
Africa Study Bible

Continue in your discovery of Christianity in Africa. Check out our free ministry resources [here](#). You can also partner in the growth that's already happening in Africa. Equip a local pastor [here](#).

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT PUBLIC HEALTH?

2 God's Word about God's Protection Against Diseases through African Eyes

“The Lord commanded Moses to send people with certain health issues out of the camp. This was to ensure that the people in the camp would remain healthy and strong and would be protected from the risk of infectious diseases. Separating people with infectious diseases from others is still an effective medical treatment today. But the larger truth here is that we must do all we can to protect the health of our community.

Many of Africa's major cities have a hospital with an infectious diseases ward. The purpose of the special ward is to prevent contagious diseases from spreading into the wider community, causing the loss of many lives.

When the Ebola outbreak occurred in West Africa, some people refused to separate the sick even when they knew they should

do so to minimize the risk of the disease spreading. Pastors prayed and touched people who were sick with the virus. In the process, such pastors helped spread Ebola. God commanded that people with contagious diseases should be set apart from others. God put in place mechanisms to deal with such diseases.

The techniques of isolation we use today may be different than were used in ancient times, but the principle of protecting the health of the nation is still important.

When a nation does that, many lives are saved. When it does not separate those with contagious diseases, many people die, as we saw in the Ebola outbreak.”

- Application note from Numbers 5: 1-4 of the *Africa Study Bible*

Continue in your discovery of Christianity in Africa. Check out our free ministry resources [here](#). You can also partner in the growth that's already happening in Africa. Equip a local pastor [here](#).



OASIS
INTERNATIONAL
PUBLISHING

AFRICA
STUDY
BIBLE™

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT PUBLIC HEALTH?

3

God's Word about Hygiene and Health through African Eyes

“Cholera, malaria, and other infectious diseases destroy life on our continent because hygiene is often neglected. Pure water is not always available. Many people drink dirty water from rivers and pools.

Some people spend days without washing their bodies. Some people do not wash hands before eating or after using the toilet.

The presence of stagnant water breeds mosquitoes, which sometimes transmit malaria. Infectious diseases and sicknesses are daily burdens for many people on our continent, and many children die before reaching five years of age.

In Africa, millions of people are HIV positive. Over all, our life expectancy is only fifty-nine years. This situation cannot lead to the growth and economic development of our continent. Included in the instructions God gave to Moses were laws about hygiene, purification, cleanliness, and health.

We may apply them a little differently today, but the principles for healthy living were part of God's laws given to Moses.

God is concerned about our health. We must personally apply the rules of hygiene daily. God's people need to be healthy to worship and to serve him. ”

- Application note from Numbers 19:7-22 of the *Africa Study Bible*

Continue in your discovery of Christianity in Africa. Check out our free ministry resources [here](#). You can also partner in the growth that's already happening in Africa. Equip a local pastor [here](#).



OASIS
INTERNATIONAL
PUBLISHING

AFRICA
STUDY
BIBLE™

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT PUBLIC HEALTH?

4

God's Word about Healing through African Eyes

“In Africa, both in the rural areas and the cities, many people still consult traditional healers when they are sick. People seek help from spiritual healers because they believe that there is a connection between their illness and spirits. Sometimes they fear their ancestors are angry or that someone has cursed them.

But God says, “Do not defile yourselves by turning to mediums or to those who consult the spirits of the dead” (Leviticus 19:31). Undeserved curses have no effect (Proverbs 26:2), and we show our trust in God by blessing those who curse us (Luke 6:28).

Contrary to many of our traditional beliefs, most sicknesses are not God's judgement of an individual. Epaphroditus almost died, but Paul said he was a true brother, co-worker, and fellow soldier (Philippians 2:26-30). Sickness may be a judgement on the world's sin as a whole (Romans 5:12), such as when pollution or wars cause illness or death. Such judgements do not necessarily fall on the person who sinned (1 Kings 14:12-13; Luke 13:2-5). When Christians die from disease or accidents, we cannot say it is a punishment from God. Remember, there is no condemnation for people who belong to Christ (Romans 8:1). Jesus bore God's wrath for us (Romans 5:8-10).

But we know that Christians do suffer. God made our bodies strong, but viruses and other problems are part of this fallen world. Sometimes Satan causes sickness directly, whether using viruses or other means (Job 2:7; Acts 10:38). But God often uses our afflictions for our benefit (Psalm 119:67, 71, 75).

The fact that everyone in this world eventually dies reminds us that healing does not always occur. Our bodies wear down (2 Corinthians 4:16). Not everyone in the Bible was healed right away (Philippians 2:26-27; 2 Timothy 4:20). God used Paul's bodily illness (Galatians 4:13-14). Elisha died of sickness yet was so full of God's power that his bones revived a corpse (2 Kings 13:14, 21)!

Although we may not know if God will heal, we are invited to pray expectantly for healing (James 5:14-16; 1 Corinthians 12:9). God's answer may not be what we expect or wish, but we cannot demand healing from a sovereign God. Healing is not always dramatic. Gradual healing and successful medical treatment are also answers to prayer. The Gospels and Acts recount many supernatural healings, called “signs,” which drew the attention of unbelievers. Such dramatic healings are most often seen when the gospel is being preached in new areas. They do not glorify the people who pray for healing (Acts 3:12-13) but Jesus and his Kingdom (Matthew 12:28; Luke 11:20).

When John the Baptist heard about what Jesus was doing, he sent his disciples to ask if Jesus was the Messiah, “or should we keep looking for someone else?” (Matthew 11:3). Jesus answered by telling of the healings he had done. “The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life” (Matthew 11:5; Isaiah 35:5-6; 61:1). In addition to confirming that Jesus was God's Son, supernatural healing was a blessing Jesus gave to people. It was one of the main activities that characterized his ministry.

He healed all kinds of diseases including blindness, hearing and speech impediments, disabled limbs, blood conditions, and seizures (Matthew 9; 17:14-18). He also healed those with fever and psychiatric and demonic disorders (Mark 1:30-31; 5:2-20). Jesus sent his disciples out to imitate his ministry, including healing.

“Then he sent them out to tell everyone about the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick” (Luke 9:2). Even while in training, the disciples were able to heal the sick (Luke 9:6) and after Pentecost, both Peter (Acts 3:1; 9:33-34) and Paul (Acts 14:8-10; 19:12; 28:8-9) continued to heal the sick.

Supernatural healing sets aside the normal laws of nature that God created. Although supernatural healings are not necessarily

everyday occurrences in the life of the Christian, Jesus did say that his followers would be able to do “even greater works” (John 14:12). Jesus’ miracles were all instantaneous, complete, and verifiable. If we are to experience supernatural healings, they are likely to follow the same pattern as those of Jesus.

Whenever God heals anyone, all of us should be grateful, even when it does not happen to us. Every gift God gives is a reminder of his promise of a restored world where all believers will be made completely whole, with no more suffering (Revelation 21:3-4). It cost Jesus everything to bring us these gifts (Matthew 8:17). ”

- Learn note from
James 5:14-16 of the
Africa Study Bible

Continue in your discovery of Christianity in Africa. Check out our free ministry resources [here](#). You can also partner in the growth that’s already happening in Africa. Equip a local pastor [here](#).



OASIS
INTERNATIONAL
PUBLISHING

AFRICA
STUDY
BIBLE™