

You've got the power to think for yourself

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When I was young, I remember being awakened in the middle of the night and carried to a relative's home. There they told me my parents had taken my young brother to a hospital for an immediate appendectomy. I was shocked and scared. I became afraid that one day the same thing would happen to me.

Years passed, and the intense fear faded into the background. Then I developed all the symptoms of appendicitis. By this time I was a daily reader of *Science and Health*. The author's ideas on the mind/body connection and on the relationship between spirituality and health had healed me of several chronic ailments. In each case, the cure was accomplished solely by spiritual means. No drugs or medical procedures had been employed.

In this serious situation, however, I had to decide how to treat the condition. There had been many cures in my family through reliance on spiritual healing. I'd had a number of healings myself through prayer alone.

With all this in mind, I turned to the Scriptures and to *Science and Health* for guidance. These two books have taught me a great deal about spiritual healing. They have shed light on the connection between thought and experience. *Science and Health* has offered many "how-to-do-it" steps.

One step: "Stand porter at the door of thought" (p. 392). In order to eradicate disease through prayer, you start with your thoughts. You come to think of yourself as a kind of mental doorkeeper. A porter is someone who has charge of a door or gate. It's the porter's job to let in only the people who are supposed to enter and keep out those who aren't. A porter has to make the decision.

Each day all kinds of thoughts come to the door of our thinking. Some thoughts are beneficial. They improve our health. Others are harmful. They make us ill. We need to distinguish between beneficial thoughts and harmful thoughts. As porters, you and I can let in wholesome, health-giving thoughts and keep out unhealthy, fearful thoughts of sickness and disease. This requires watching what we think moment by moment.

Here's another step: "Admitting only such conclusions as you wish realized in bodily results, you will control yourself harmoniously" (p. 392). In order to be well, we need to pay attention to the type of conclusions that we make. For example, are we concluding that because a family member has had a particular illness, the same may happen to us? If so, we should put this conclusion in the "harmful to health" thought category.

On the other hand, we can let in health-giving conclusions. You or I can say, "I do not have to think unhealthy thoughts. God made me well. He formed me in His perfect likeness. He gives me health, wellness, and peace of mind. He did not make me subject to disease. I possess God-given strength and freedom. Disease is not inevitable for anyone. I am well right now, in that God has never stopped loving or caring for me."

Thoughts of fear aren't really natural to you or me. We are spiritual, the likeness of omnipotent Spirit, and that means we are actually made fearless by God. Each of us has power from God, no matter who we are.

But we need to tap into that power by thinking about our spiritual nature. The goodness and strength of God becomes more apparent as a result of this, and we find that we are safe. We find God maintaining our well-being, now and always.

Going back to my prayer about what looked like appendicitis, I kept practicing being a porter at the door of my thought and letting in only beneficial conclusions. This changed my thoughts. And my health. The symptoms ended, and I felt well. But a week or so later they returned. Again I prayed, in the same way. Again the illness went.

But the cycle continued. There was apparently something more that I needed to do. I found this: "When the condition is present which you say induces disease, whether it be air, exercise, heredity, contagion, or accident, then perform your office as porter and shut out these unhealthy thoughts and fears" (p. 392). There it was. *Shut the door.*

A doorkeeper wouldn't let in people who weren't permitted to enter, only to throw them out later. A doorkeeper wouldn't admit them in the first place. The door would be closed to them and would remain closed.

To be well and stay well, the door of thought must be closed and *kept* closed to thoughts that do not come from God. This includes refusing to speculate about disease, resisting the impulsion to mull over how we are suffering, declining to rehash past misery, and not ruminating over the problem. By keeping the door closed to fear and ill health, we deny them entrance to our bodies and our lives.

As I practiced watching what I was thinking and kept the door of my thought closed to the fear of appendicitis, I got well and stayed well. In the years since that time, there has been no recurrence of those symptoms. I am no longer afraid of appendicitis, or of any other disease.

If you're afraid of getting some disease, why not try this approach? It's healed me. It has done the same for others. It can do the same for you.