

2 Corinthians 12:7b-9 NIV - 7 ... Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

What have been some of your experiences with prayers for healing? Were some answered and others not? How did you respond to God in each case?

The greatest miracle is the restoration of our relationship with God which will lead one day to full healing and restoration of all things.

## WRAP-UP

The lame beggar in Acts expected nothing more than some spare change because that was what he had known his whole life. But Peter and John had witnessed the power of the Holy Spirit and their expectations were much greater than that. They saw this man through God's eyes and met more than his need for money. They met his need for hope, healing and relationship with God. The people who saw the man walking and praising God were astounded because they were searching for a logical answer and couldn't find one. They didn't expect God to do miracles outside the gate, but God had moved out to dwell in his people and through them He brought Good News.

## Memory Verse

But Peter said, "I don't have any silver or gold for you. But I'll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, get up and walk!"  
- Acts 3:6 NLT

## PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: \_\_\_\_\_

Pray for your group members' needs: \_\_\_\_\_

Challenge- Ask God to raise your expectations then watch for Him to move.

## ***"More Than I Expected"*** **Book of Acts – Week #5**

### INTRODUCTION

If there was one thing the disciples had learned at Pentecost it was to expect the unexpected. After the appearance of the Holy Spirit and the power they experienced the early church knew it wouldn't be life as usual. But for others, their only expectation was to live life as they had always experienced it. That was certainly the case for the lame beggar in Act chapter 3. Whereas Peter and John were selling their possessions, this man put his hope in what little money he might receive as he begged outside the Temple. But what Peter and John offered was certainly more than he had expected.

### Key Passage

Acts 3:1-9 NLT - 1 Peter and John went to the Temple one afternoon to take part in the three o'clock prayer service. 2 As they approached the Temple, a man lame from birth was being carried in. Each day he was put beside the Temple gate, the one called the Beautiful Gate, so he could beg from the people going into the Temple. 3 When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for some money. 4 Peter and John looked at him intently, and Peter said, "Look at us!" 5 The lame man looked at them eagerly, expecting some money. 6 But Peter said, "I don't have any silver or gold for you. But I'll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, get up and walk!" 7 Then Peter took the lame man by the right hand and helped him up. And as he did, the man's feet and ankles were instantly healed and strengthened. 8 He jumped up, stood on his feet, and began to walk! Then, walking, leaping, and praising God, he went into the Temple with them. 9 All the people saw him walking and heard him praising God.

### STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

#### 1. Our Expectations

In this story a man who was born lame sat at the Temple begging for money. He had low expectations because his whole life he had known nothing else. In the same place we find Peter and John going to the

Temple just as they would have done all their lives. But because they had begun to see God moving in powerful new ways, they were prepared for things to change.

*When we follow the same patterns day in and day out, we come to expect nothing more than repetition of what's happened before. The expectation we have for God in our life is shaped by our past experiences. What would you say are the experiences that mainly shape your expectation of God in your life? Which have increased your expectations, and which are holding back your expectations?*

## 2. Jesus Changes Things

Before Pentecost, things had been unchanged for the Jews for hundreds of years. The Temple was the only place where their sacrifices were brought and offered to God, and then only by the high priest.

*According to these passages how did that change after Jesus' resurrection?*

*1 Corinthians 3:16 NIV - 16 Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?*

*Hebrews 4:14-16 NIV - 14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet he did not sin. 16 Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

As Peter and John approached the lame man, they saw him through God's eyes with empathy for his weakness. And because they themselves had experienced God's power their expectations far exceeded his.

*The power of Jesus can change those things that we have given up hoping to ever see changed. Have you experienced or witnessed Jesus' power over addiction, pain, depression, ruined relationships*

*or any other hopeless area? Share those with your group and encourage one another to greater expectations.*

The lame man had been unable to walk into the temple and worship God, but God came to him and turned him into a worshiper who declared the power of Jesus to the world. (Acts 3:9) His expectations had been much lower, but Peter and John knew that God could do, and wanted to do, so much more.

*If our expectations are only to attend church for an hour on Sunday, sing some songs then go home again, we are missing out on what God can and will do if we look to Him expectantly. Share with your group some of the greater things you dream God might do through you and our church body to reach others.*

## 3. Our Timing is not God's Timing

According to Acts 3:2 the lame man was seated at the Temple gate every day. That means each time Jesus had gone to the Temple he would probably have seen him, yet Jesus didn't heal him. God's purpose required a different timing.

Sickness, disease and healing raise many questions amongst believers. Even Jesus own disciples believed blindness was a result of sin. (John 9:2) But Jesus clarified that God uses healing to display His power. (John 9:3)

*John 9:1-3 NIV - 1 As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.*

*The first miracle of healing in Acts didn't happen within the walls of the Temple, but outside of its gate where Peter and John became God's conduit of love and power. How does this apply to us today?*

Physical healing is not the end all of Christian faith. The bible doesn't promise healing to the faithful. Physical healing can only be temporary because our bodies will eventually fail. In fact Paul asked three times that God would heal him and God said, "No."